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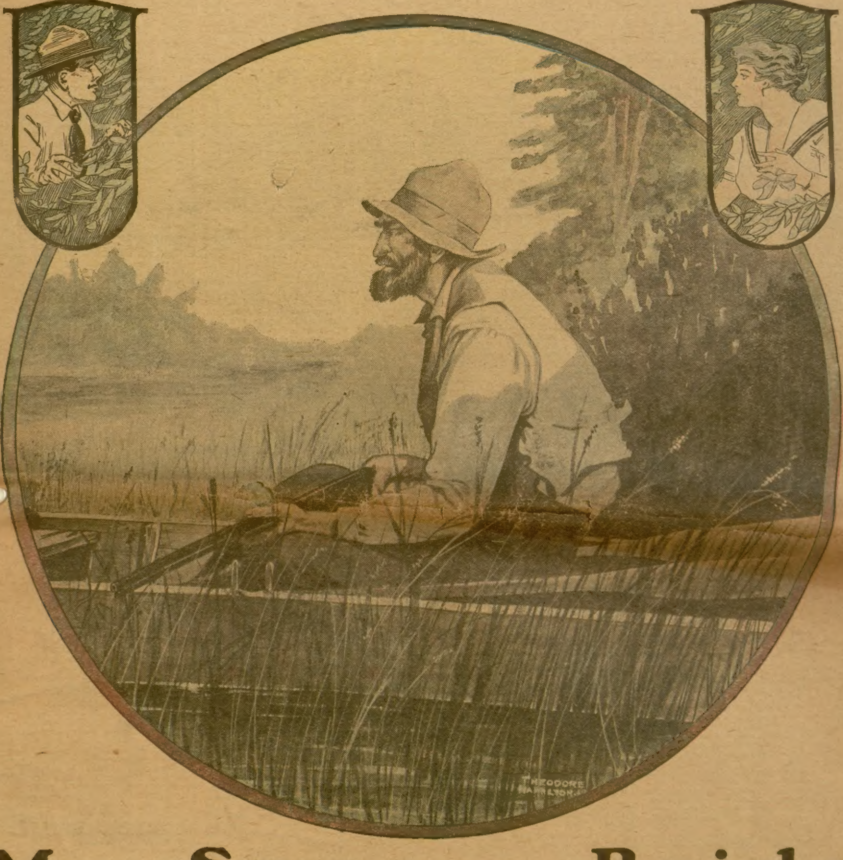


# My Swamp Bride

## By Augustin W. Breeden

I KNOW that it is the common belief in this country that there is no genuine backwoods left in the United States, no strange and unmapped places. There are. Three years ago I found this out in a most unusual way. I had been working for twenty-seven months without a halt and felt that I had earned a vacation. Where should I go? I bought a ticket to New Orleans and there bought a ticket west, a few hours' run out of the city. I got off at a town with four-story buildings, electric lights and automobiles, and here I bought a canoe and camping outfit with the intention of seeking adventure in the swamps not far from this town. Well, I found the adventure.

The first day passed just as I had planned it. I rowed all day against the sluggist current of Quelque Chose Bayou, meeting a few fishermen, a gasoline pleasure boat or two, and a couple of rafts of long-leaf pine logs, and spent the night with an Acadian backwoodsman, who told me endless unbelievable stories of the pirate, Jean Lafitte, and his hidden treasure.

"So far, so good," I said to myself, and rowed on the next day farther and farther into the hidden mazes of the Quelque Chose Swamp. Two days more I spent on those dreamy, intricate waterways, heavy with the scent of the water hyacinth and over-arched by giant live-oaks and cypresses festooned with Spanish moss. I seemed to have gotten out of the region of power boats and log rafts, and only twice upon that third day did I encounter lone fishermen on the bayous. When I asked these about a lodging or a camping place for the night I found that they did not understand a word of English. They both appeared to be warning me to turn back, but I only laughed at their jargon and pushed on.

That third night I camped by a little spring on the bank of the bayou. I had plenty of canned goods and a good blanket, and would be comfortable enough, but I thought, as I went cheerlessly about my cheerful fire, that it would have been far jollier if I had brought a friend along. I thought of alligators, and possibly bears. Bears! It seemed so childish to fear bears, and yet was it not in one of these Louisiana swamps that Roosevelt had killed two big black bears, a year or so before?

I was eating my supper and thinking what a fine flashlight photograph the dark boles and monster branches of the cypresses would make, when suddenly there was the sharp report of a gun and the whine of a bullet over my head. I immediately fell flat on my face.

Bang—whee! went another bullet.

I waited with palpitating heart, expecting to he hit the next instant.

Bang—whee! Bang—whee-ou! Bang—

spat! The bark flew from a tree ten feet above where I lay.

I neither moved nor cried out, but I felt spots on my back where I was sure the next bullet would bury itself. I lay thus for some moments, and then above the throbbing of my heart I heard approaching footsteps, and some one pushing forward thru the rustling palmettos. Could this be a joke—the rough man-play of some backwoodsman? I asked myself.

Suddenly the steps ceased and all was quiet for a painfully long time, then a rough voice said: "Stand out in the light with your hands up over your head!"

I did as I was bidden, but my legs were so weak from fear that I could hardly stand. Almost as soon as I was in position in the light of the campfire, a huge, dark man came up to me with a drooping, slatternly little woman at his heels. I would have said at first that the man was a mulatto. His skin was swarthy and his nose and mouth shaped like those of a negro, but his cheek bones were high and his hair as straight as mine. When he addressed the little old woman at his back he spoke a patois that sounded like French, but I was really too excited to try to make out what language it was.

"What yer doin' on these by-ahs, young feller?" he said, thrusting his face into mine, while the little old woman held a cocked rifle negligently at her hip with the muzzle aimed only too accurately at my heart.

"I was just rowing for pastime and have camped for the night," I replied. "I don't mean a particle of harm to anybody."

"What's that?" he queried, pointing at my fraternity pin, a small gold star encircled by a silver crescent.

"That's my frat pin," I explained; "it's a sort of badge."

"A what?" he roared.

"It's a little ornament," I explained again, "and it shows that I belong to a lodge."

At this juncture the woman began to jabber her patois, and her big mate unceremoniously took the pin off my lapel and handed it to her for her inspection. After some more patois he seemed satisfied about the pin and handed it back to me and asked me where I was from. I told him I was from New York City and that I was a tourist. When I used the word tourist he began to laugh uproariously.

"Haw! haw! haw!" he bellowed. "You're a tourist, hein? So! We bury our tourists on Deux Cheniere above the mud flats!"

Then, while I stood there trembling between anger at his outrageous treatment and fear of what he might do, he suddenly changed front completely and went off on a new tack.

"Come on, boy!" he shouted. "Come on home with me and stay all night. Why, you're scared to death! Can't you take a joke from a rough old back- [illegible] only meant to skeer ye an' see the color o' your liver."

"Well, it's white all right," I answered hotly, "especially when it comes to fighting a man with the advantages all on his side. I thank you for your hospitality, but I shall stay by my campfire."

"Oh, no, that wouldn't be the best thing; no," replied the giant quickly. "It's alligators in the by-ah there sixteen feet long, yes; an' it's a pant'er been heard in this swamp for the last three nights, an' by his tracks he's a big 'un."

I didn't believe his alligator and panther story, and I had by this time got thoroly angry, but I decided it would be best to obey him.

"All right," I said, "I'll go home with you or wherever else you say, since you have all the advantage; but I want you to understand that as soon as I get out of here I'll put an officer of the law after you for mistreating a peaceable citizen."

The change that came over him at my words made me shrink away in terror. He looked at me for a moment as if he half intended to murder me on the spot. Then he showed his teeth in a snarl and said: "You'll never get out! March!"

It is needless to say that I marched. The little woman led the way, and he walked behind me, carrying both my gun and his. We walked thus for perhaps a mile, and then suddenly the dark timber overhead gave way to a little clearing, with the dark outline of a low log house in the center and with not another building to be seen, and with not a stump that rose more than three or four inches above the ground.

"The house is a blockhouse," I told myself, "and everything is cleared away so that there is no possibility of an ambuscade; and this is in the United States!"

The little old woman opened the door and I received the greatest surprise of my life. I stood in a typical American bungalow—typical except for its greater luxury—and before me stood a typical American girl. On the floor were rugs that had come from the Maison Blanche in New Orleans, or probably had been ordered by that house direct from Paris; a filigree fruit basket full of peaches and pears stood on a center table; and on a what-not lay a popular novel not a month off the press. Here was a little square of civilization in the heart of a savage wilderness. I could easily have believed that all that had passed in the last hour was a dream or actually a joke, as the old fellow had said.

"Whom have I the honor of meeting?" I said in my politest tones, addressing the young woman before me.

"I am Miss Helen Bledsoe," said the girl, "and you? What is your name?"

"Orrin Duncan," I replied, searching mechanically for a card.

"I am pleased to meet you, Mr. Duncan," murmured the girl very properly. "This is my father and mother. They saw your campfire over on the Cheniere and went out to invite you to spend the night with us. I hope you will be able to enjoy our rough fare. Will you have a seat? Supper will be ready in a few moments. If you wish to bathe your face you will find a bowl and pitcher in the lavatory there behind the curtain." So saying, this modern American girl began to jabber that eternal patois to her parents, and they all three left me.

I had by this time made up my mind to make the most of my situation, so I spent the remainder of the time before supper formulating an apology for my threat of the law and a promise never to do anything to annoy my hospitable friends. At supper the young woman and I were the only ones at the table. Her mother and an ancient, wrinkled negress waited on the table; in fact, it was plain that the girl was treated like a guest and that the mother was only a sort of slave. To my further surprise my young hostess talked of New York and Boston. She had something to say of the Boston Symphony Orchestra and compared it with the Theodore Thomas Orchestra of Chicago.

"I must confess, Miss Bledsoe," I said, "that I am no musical critic, and I could hardly give an opinion on either of these two orchestras, as I have never heard either of them. I am only a poor bookkeeper, with rarely a day off or an extra dollar to spend; and, besides, I am too much taken up just now with the mystery of my surroundings to care to discuss any other topic. Your father's manner of introducing himself to me was—well, rather startling, to say the least, and——"

The girl laid a rosy finger across a pair of rather full lips, and a pair of deep, tropical eyes sent me a warning.

"My father is a great joker," she said, as soon as her mother had gone into the kitchen. "You must consider all that you have seen and heard tonight as a joke. Be dull—see nothing strange in anything you see; but if you are questioned make it plain that you are nothing but an innocent tourist, and no spy or——" The mother suddenly appeared in the doorway, and the girl went on without the slightest change of tone: "Still, I am bound to insist that George Barr McCutcheon is too light for serious reading and so is Harold MacGrath."

"I prefer H. G. Wells to either of them," I replied; "he understands the English, and I am sure those two do not." I nodded my head slightly toward the kitchen.

"Yes, they do, more than we imagine," said the girl quickly. "They are full of surprises, like our friend Jack London."

While this unsatisfactory lingo was going on at the table I kept straining my ears for outside noises. That the father had gone away on some mission connected with my case I was sure. I decided to try a conversation in German and asked Miss Bledsoe how she liked that language. She replied that she liked it very well, and racking my brain for high-school German, I slowly shaped five words: "What will they do with me?" I watched her mother narrowly and saw by her countenance that she thought I was still speaking English. The girl's reply was quick, but I was such a poor linguist that she had to repeat it three or four times before I understood, and this constant repeating attracted her mother's attention.

What she said was: "If you keep your head they will do nothing, perhaps; but if you lose your head you lose it. Ha! ha! That is a good joke, ja!"

"I am in no situation to appreciate jokes," I said curtly in English.

"Nevertheless," retorted the girl, "a joke's a joke."

"Pardon my curt reply, Miss Bledsoe," I said, "but the evening has been so full of surprises to me that I am not quite myself. As you say, a joke's a joke even if it is on one's self. Ha! ha! If I lose my head I lose it—ergo—and what if I lose my heart?"

"Then you find another, of course," was the quick reply. But the next moment the girl's head drooped and her neck flushed up rosy in the lamplight. "Pardon me, sir," she said with all the dignity she could command. "I know you will think me a rude, forward girl; and I have really no right to be sitting here talking with you on terms of equality. I am of an outcast race and my father is an outlaw. If you knew my story you would weep for me——" She dropped into slow German as her mother appeared in the doorway. "I will be your friend. No harm is intended against you, but you may bring harm upon yourself by a single false move."

As the girl uttered these last words there was a heavy step on the porch outside and the father pushed open the door.

"Well," he said, with an attempt at geniality, "I come home and find you two talking, as young people ought to. So! I am glad you are friends, me." He threw himself upon a bench and cleared his throat with an ahem as if he had something important to say and hardly knew how to begin. "Mister—Mister Duncan," he said at length, "I want to apologize to you for my strange conduct tonight. Since a long time it is a feud between my family and a family of Thorntons, that live up the by-ah, an' you look almost like one of the Thornton boys that has been gone to college since two years. Me, I took you for him, an' that is why I fired."

"That is all right, Mr. Bledsoe," I replied, "your daughter here has been explaining to me all about the Bledsoe-Thornton feud." But the next instant I saw my mistake. That terrible man flashed a look at his horrified daughter and one at me, and I expected him to kill me the next instant. I knew that this feud story was a lie, and in my blundering eagerness to pretend to believe it I had overshot the mark.

The old villain immediately fell into patois, and the four of them, he and the three women, held such a powwow over me as would have frightened the wits out of a braver man than I was. The girl was plainly trying to defend me, and at last she seemed to satisfy her father that there was nothing wrong in my answer. "Is it not true," she said at last, speaking to me in English, "that altho I told you about the feud I did not tell you the names of the people we were fighting against?"

"Yes," I replied, turning to the father, "I must have got the name of your enemies from you just then; she only told me that you were having a deadly feud with a family up the bayou."

"So!" said the giant. "Hel[illegible]ke the gentleman into the parlor [illegible]y for him. The Beauford boys are coming over here on business tonight, but we will sit out on the gallery and not disturb you young people."

At this speech my mind became rife with tales of murders at lonely wayside houses. Was it not the terrible Benders that had a beautiful daughter who enticed men to their death? Under cover of the music which this young woman played for me she began to talk to me. She talked almost without moving her lips and looked straight at her music meanwhile, so that at first I scarcely understood a word she said. But soon I began to piece together what she was saying. "We are closely watched—we are closely watched," she repeated several times, and then she began repeating: "Don't talk too much—don't talk too much." Then the burden of her advice became: "Stick to the truth—stick to the truth."

She had hardly finished this last bit of advice when her father came to the door and summoned me peremptorily to come to the dining-room. There I was confronted by seven of the most villainous looking men I ever saw. I could have believed myself on board a pirate ship of Jean Lafitte or Captain Kidd from the scene before me. Two of the men were barefooted with their trousers rolled almost to their knees, all were bearded, ragged, and filthy, and all dressed in the picturesque manner of the tropics. There was no determining the nationality of any of them with any degree of certainty. One looked like a full-blooded Indian, two may have been Sicilians, two were of the same general type as the man Bledsoe, one was plainly a Spaniard and one an American. One particularly villainous looking old fellow of the Bledsoe type kept up a constant chatter of French patois, the same that the Bledsoes spoke.

One after another they questioned me, while I sat trembling before them, answering the best I could. My name and address? What was my occupation? Why had I chosen to spend my vacation on these particular "by-ahs." What did I mean by threatening Bledsoe with the law? Why had I spoken of the Thornton feud when there was no such feud? What kind of lingo was that I had talked with the girl at the supper table?

I answered every question directly and truthfully, fearing all the time lest some swarthy giant would strike out my brains if my answer failed to please him. In the midst of the parley the little American, who was a consumptive with both feet in the grave, leaped from his seat and began to dance about me with his Winchester in his hands.

"There are only eleven notches on this old gun," he shouted between fits of coughing. "I want to make it a round dozen before I die, and I hain't got long to live!"

"H-s-s-s!" cried the girl. "Shame on you, Rob Lee, for a bloodthirsty brute! You ought to be burning candles for your soul instead of trying to make it blacker. You'll be in your grave before the birds come South again!"

"Uh-huh, you love him!" cried the villain with the Winchester. "That's right! Make love to him—that's your style!"

Old Bledsoe leaped half the length of the room and struck the insulter a blow like the kick of a mule. He fell upon the floor with the blood gushing from his mouth and I felt sure that he was dying. The old negress came in from the kitchen and began to bathe his face, and he came to himself and began to talk. "I'm dying," he gasped, "you've killed me, Bledsoe!"

Neither the man who had struck him nor any of the other outlaws paid the least attention to him, but the young woman went quickly to his side. "Bring me some—holy water!" he managed to gasp between hemorrhages. "I never liked—your d—d Catholic religion—but it's— better'n none!" And with that he was dead.

"Is it true what he said about you, little girl?" asked the father, turning to his daughter as she stood above the dead man. For a moment the girl's beautiful, lustrous eyes sought mine, and I tried my best to look "yes" with my own. She understood.

"Yes," she said slowly, "Mr. Duncan has told me he loves me, and I return his love."

"Then, by Heaven, he's goin' to stay here an' marry you!" cried the outlaw. "Mr. Duncan, boy," he continued, coming over to where I was standing and taking my hand, "you must become one of us—but, no, you don't have to. You can take my girl and go away—go up North and be happy. But let me tell you our history. You think we are mulattoes, now don't you? My wife looks like a nigger, I'll admit that; but look at our daughter—she's whiter than you are."

I looked and shuddered. What was this I had tacitly consented to do? Was this beautiful and accomplished girl a negress? In spite of my fear I looked the disgust I felt at the situation; and all the while Rob Lee lay dead upon the floor before me.

The father did not catch my look, but continued: "Boy, we are no nearer bein' niggers than you are. We're red-bones. The red-bones was in this country before Columbus discovered it. Our forefathers built their temples in the Yucatan Peninsula before the pyramids was built in Egypt. And here in America, where the Constitution says that all men are equal, we ain't no more'n so many black niggers. They never would let my little daughter here go to the public schools with the white children. Why am I here in this d—d pest hole? I killed a planter for callin' my little girl a coon. I ain't no common murderer, but I have to hide here in the swamp because I know that I wouldn't stand any more show in a trial than the blackest nigger in Louisiana. Now, are you satisfied? Do you still want to marry my daughter?"

In spite of the danger I was in I was struck by the humor of the situation; but the faintest smile would have cost me my life at that moment, and I knew it. In my soul I believed then, as I do now, that the "red-bones" have negro blood in their veins, and hence, that this young woman was part negro. But why stick at a possible thirty-second part when life was at stake?

"Even if you had told me that your daughter had negro blood in her veins I could not have believed it," I answered steadily. "From the first moment that my eyes met hers I loved her. She is the most cultured, the most intelligent, and the most beautiful woman I ever met in all my life."

"She ought to be," said the father proudly. "I've spent plenty of money on her. I always said that my daughter was as good as any white girl. I sent her North to school, an' she passed for Spanish. She has been in good society all her life an' has traveled in Europe. Son, if you hain't got money enough to keep her up like she ought to be kept

LOOK out for a most fascinating leading story in next week's Ledger, entitled, "THE WIFE WHO DARED; or, THE SUICIDE PACT." It is a triangle story and most interesting and unusual. Read it. We have on hand a lot of the finest stories ever written, which will appear in the Ledger during the coming months. We wish that all our readers may have a HAPPY AND PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR, and we hope they will stand by the Ledger and reward us for trying to give them a crackerjack paper.

up, I've got plenty to let you have. I was one of the richest sugar planters in south Louisiana before I killed that scoundrel."

I suppose I had grown very pale, for old Bledsoe suddenly changed his tone and cried: "Come, boy, cheer up and drink some wine. You're not half as scared as you look. You really bluffed up to me right manful-like once or twice tonight, an' you can lie like a pirate."

The betrothal feast we held that night will stick in my memory till the day I die. It was a scene that belonged to the swashbuckler days of the Spanish Main rather than to modern times. Those picturesque outlaws circled about me, giving me every assurance of undying friendship. And by my side thru it all sat that queenly, tropical beauty, Helen Bledsoe.

"You are not bound to marry me," she whispered in my ear. "You were forced into an avowal of love by immediate danger to yourself, just as I was forced to declare I loved you by reason of your danger. No, you are not bound."

My head must have been completely muddled by the kaleidoscopic succession of events and the fiery wines they served me, for I felt my pulses thrill at the near presence of this octoroon goddess, or whatever she was, and holding her hand I whispered promises of eternal loyalty.

"I will take you away from here," I murmured. "I will place you among your equals and give you your long-denied birthright. Think, dearie, what life will mean to us when we have a splendid apartment in little old New York, with a touring car and a box at the theater, and—and——"

There is no telling what all I might have said if the wines had not finally got the better of me; the last thing I remember was shooting the chutes and riding the roulette at Coney Island in the company of a lot of West Indian pirates.

The days that succeeded that fateful night were not unlike the idle days that two young people might have passed together on any typical Southern plantation. Miss Bledsoe and I rowed together on the bayous, talked idly of literature and the stage, people and places, the good old South, and purely personal matters. If I could ever have separated her in my thoughts from that terrible scene with her brutal father looking indifferently on the dying Rob Lee, and she herself practically making love to me over the corpse, I might have truly loved her. But I saw her always as the center of that terrible picture; and, besides, there was always present the haunting doubt that she was, after all, perhaps, nothing but an octoroon negress, or at best the daughter of the outcast race of "red-bones" and of an acknowledged outlaw and murderer. Sometimes I feared and almost loathed her, but, for the most part, I was hypnotized by her presence and was constantly renewing my vows of fidelity.

As for the young woman, she was honor itself. She admitted readily enough that she cared for me, but insisted that I was not bound to her by anything I had said. She even went so far as to declare that she would not marry me until I was safely away from that place, and, being under no compulsion whatever, should express my preference for her of all women. But the father, suspecting his daughter of being too honorable and fearing that I would try to profit by her scruples to make my escape, announced that we must be married before I left the swamp. His attitude toward me during those days of my imprisonment was always kind and courteous; but, needless to say, I never ceased to hate and fear him.

As the days went by I learned all about the little colony of outlaws hidden there in the swamp. They held a little three-cornered bit of territory and lived there with their wives and children in a primitive manner. Of the twelve men of the colony, two were always on duty patrolling the bayous, the shifts being twelve hours and the duty falling in succession on every able-bodied man. If a tourist or an intruder of any sort came too near the colony he was either guided skillfully around it, or frightened away by tales of "bad men" farther in. These men seemed to be living honestly enough by hunting, fishing, and farming on a small scale; but they were all men with prices on their head, and none of them would hesitate to kill to protect himself or his fellows. I had had the bad luck to wander into their territory at a time when they were expecting an attack from the sheriff and his posse; it was that and my inconsiderate threat of the law that still promised to cost me dearly unless I played my cards most wisely.

It was during the second week of my stay and just three days before the time set for my marriage with Miss Bledsoe that she took me to see the little graveyard set aside for spies, deputy sheriffs, and intruders of all sorts. It contained seven graves, all without crosses or headboards except one. This one, the last and freshest-looking, was marked with a piece of marble, evidently broken from the top of an old washstand; and on the marble, scratched deeply as with the point of a file or other sharp instrument, were these words:

"He played for $10,000 blood money
and got—this."

"You composed that epitaph, I suppose," I said, turning reproachfully to Miss Bledsoe.

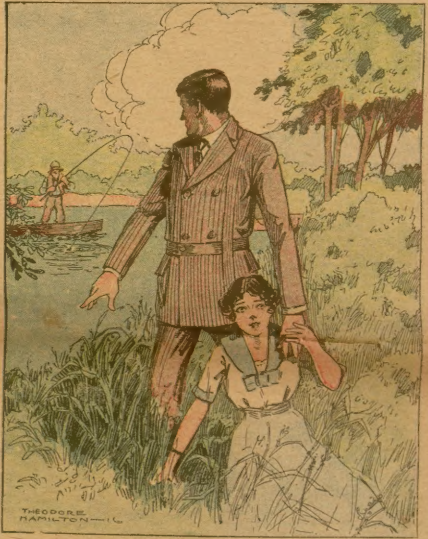
"Yes," she admitted, half-mournfully, half-playfully. "He put up a good fight and killed three of our men; so they asked me to think up something appropriate to go on his tombstone."

"And this, I presume, will be my grave," I said, indicating the eighth space; "and what will you make up for my epitaph?"

The girl suddenly turned to me, her eyes swimming.

"Oh, Orrin!" she cried, "I seem hard, I know, and light, too; but if I had not hardened myself or taken things lightly, I would have been in my grave. I have seen so much—oh, I have seen so much! Please, please take me away from this terrible place and never let me see or hear of it again!"

My heart was deeply touched, and I held her for a moment in my arms and made a fervent and sincere promise to take her away as she had asked me; and from that moment forward I never once wavered in my intention to marry her.



*I learned all about the little colony of outlaws.*

Things happened rapidly after that day. That night at midnight I was aroused by a commotion outside the room where I slept, and while I was dressing Miss Bledsoe whispered thru the door that another spy had been taken. Before daylight the terrible trial scene which I had undergone was repeated with him. He was a deputy sheriff—that was pretty clear—and he would have been shot the next morning, I am sure, if it had not been for the arrival of a priest, who had come to perform our wedding ceremony. But all was peaceable and regular from the moment the priest arrived, the prisoner being detained meanwhile in a lonely cabin.

Sunday, the day for the marriage, arrived. The women and children of the colony flocked in; the improvised finery of the women and the picturesque half-nakedness of the children made a striking scene. It seemed that Miss Bledsoe had always been a good angel among them; it was Ma'm'zelle this and Messa that every way she turned; and sad as she was, she had a kind word for everybody. Few men were present, as the patrol had been doubled after the capture of the second prisoner, and the whole camp was on the alert.

But that night, for some cause or other, the vigilance was relaxed and all the men save three came in to the wedding feast. And such a feast! It was not a feast but an orgy. At 11 o'clock I took my young wife's hand and started to lead her away from the table.

"Only a few more days of this," she whispered, "and then, freedom and happiness for us two."

While she was speaking, a nearby shot was heard above the noise indoors, and the next instant the door was pushed open and an outlaw fell gasping upon the floor. It is impossible to describe the scene that followed. An officer burst open the door directly behind me and my young bride and fired point-blank into the face of a big creole who was in the act of reaching for his Winchester. The next instant a bomb of some kind exploded at the corner of the kitchen, knocking us all down in a confused heap and putting out the lights.

Twice I called my young wife's name in the confusion, but receiving no answer I scrambled from the mass of human beings and started to run for cover. I was just outside the house when I ran into the arms of some man, who held me with the grip of a vise.

"I've got one here!" hissed the man. "Some of you fellows come and help me take care of him."

I breathed a prayer of thanksgiving as I heard the blessed English and not that eternal patois.

"I'm peaceable," I whispered; "handcuff me or do whatever you please just so you keep me out of the hands of those bloodthirsty outlaws. And for Heaven's sake don't fire into the house any more; my wife's in there!"

"Cut it," snapped an officer, "we don't ask advice of our prisoners!"

An ominous stillness had followed the loud explosion, a stillness broken only by the heavy breathing of some one in the house or the cautious tread of an officer outside. A moment passed, and then a blaze sprang up from the wrecked kitchen, and almost immediately a dozen reports rang on the air. A bullet sang over my head and I fell flat, pulling the man down who held me prisoner. That the people inside the house were doing their best to put out the fire I had no doubt; but it grew and grew in spite of them, and the place was growing dangerously lighter every minute. I knew what those outlaws would do for us as soon as it grew light enough, and I knew also what the law officers would do for them as soon as the fire should run them out.

"Give them a chance to surrender," I pleaded; "for God's sake don't kill innocent women!"

"Come back into the dark," whispered a voice from behind us; "it's getting too light here."

Three of us began to scramble for safer ground and thereby drew a shower of bullets after us.

"Rats!" said one of the officers, "that old wolf Bledsoe hasn't left anything around here big enough for a grasshopper to hide behind! I wish I was back in town!"

Finally we rolled into a shallow ditch filled with water, and I lay on my back with just my nose sticking out.

"Come out one at a time with your hands up over your head!" yelled an officer of our group, whom I took to be the sheriff; but another shower of bullets in our direction was all the answer he got.

"Tell 'em to send out their women folks," I suggested.

"'Send out your women folks hands up,'" shouted the officer.

There was quiet for a moment, while the flames grew steadily brighter; and then the women began to file out, each with her hands over her head. I watched with straining eyes for my bride to appear; she was the very last to come out.

I can scarcely tell what followed, it was all so sudden and so surprising. But I know that my young wife was hardly ten feet from the door when there was a rush of menfolk from behind, and a pitched battle in the open followed. I shouted with all my voice to Helen to run for safety. She ran straight toward me, and her father came on behind her. I saw him raise his gun to fire, but the next instant he dropped it and pitched forward upon the ground. I was on my feet trying to get to Helen to shield her as best I could; but the officer who had captured me kept dragging at me from behind, trying to use me as a shield for himself. The women seemed to be trying to huddle together for protection, and trying to keep Helen amongst them. But she broke away and once more started toward me. Then the thing happened. She suddenly staggered back a step, and then put her hand over her heart and stood there in the firelight in the midst of that battle, like a Grecian statue.

I broke from the man who held me and ran to her. She had fallen to the ground, and her mother and the ancient negress were stooping over her. I, too, leaned over her and begged her with breaking heart to live. She was dead before we reached her.

The fight lasted only a moment longer. With Bledsoe's death all the outlaws save two threw down their guns and surrendered; these two escaped into the darkness still fighting. When the tally of dead and wounded was taken more than half the outlaws were found to be dead or seriously wounded, and two officers had paid the debt of duty. My fellow prisoner had escaped with a slight wound to the ranks of the officers.

I had no trouble establishing my innocence of all allegiance with the outlaws, especially as every one of them, including Helen's mother, denounced me as a spy and said they believed that I helped to plan the raid. I stayed in that country only long enough to see my beautiful bride buried with all proper rites, and then took a train back to New Orleans and thence to New York. I had been gone just three weeks to a day; but in those three weeks I had lived ten years. The only memento I brought back of my tragic experience and the beautiful girl I married was a tiny miniature of her, which she gave me with a kiss the day she became my bride.

"Did you have a good vacation?" asked my employer, as I returned to my desk a week ahead of time. But I did not answer; to have uttered the name of my beautiful wife then would have been a profanation. It was only afterward, when I was summoned South to attend the trial of those outlaws, that I told the whole story, much as I have told it here.

* * *

### UNREQUITED LOVE.

Miss Roxsmith takes her poodle out
  That he may have the air;
A blanket warm is tied about
  The beast with tender care.

She stuffs him full of dainty food,
  His coat is brushed each day;
The best for him is not too good,
  He gets it anyway.

The poodle shows a face of woe,
  Perhaps you'll wonder why;
I cannot say; I simply know
  He has a cynic's eye.

Miss Roxsmith lavishes her love
  On him with hugs and squeals,
While growlingly he gnaws her glove
  Or tries to bite her heels.

It's clear to me that poodle glum
  Resents his pampered state,
And hopes that soon the time will come
  When he can pull his freight.

Altho Miss Roxsmith loves the beast
  And could not love him more,
He finds that life, to say the least,
  Is a confounded bore!

* * *

## Neglected Bride.

Alfred M. Mitchell, Jr., the prominent journalist and able editor, joined the great majority the other day by slipping quietly over to St. Clairsville, Ohio, and triumphantly leading to the altar Miss Jean Giffen, the charming shower-bouqueter of that center of population.

No sooner was the cat out of the bag than a prominent fellow journalist, a rare and blithe soul if ever there was one, set the wild echoes flying in the vicinity of Martin's Ferry and St. Clairsville by reporting the quiet but pretty wedding in part as follows:

"The bride was dressed in a conventional wedding gown of white. The groom wore a flowing black coat, with an elaborate white vest decorated with real pearls. His shoes were of black with real lace shoestrings. Imported gray broadcloth trousers of the latest cut and make, white gloves and a white cravat of fine India linen, together with collar, shirt and handkerchief of similar material, completed his perfect costume.

"For a traveling suit the groom wore a tailored suit of blue serge with handsome tan shoes and imported felt hat."

# The Coral Emblem

-:- Or -:-

# The Kidnaped Actress

## By Willard E. Hawkins

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### CHAPTER IV.

### CONSEQUENCES.

THE judge glared at me sternly—several hours had elapsed since my aforementioned consciousness of acute misery.

"Christopher Londenbecker, you are charged with vagrancy," he said. "What 've you got to say for yourself?"

"Your honor," I insisted hoarsely "I am not a vagrant. It is true that a policeman picked me up last night asleep on a park bench; but I don't make a habit of sleeping on benches. I am a respectable member of this community. My friends will vouch for me."

"All right," he interrupted hurriedly. "Use the phone—but get a move on."

Some minutes later, I returned, utterly puzzled and crestfallen.

"Your honor, I can't explain this at all. I have been employed at the Peerless Paint works, and I felt certain that Mr. Mandeville would vouch for me."

"Well?"

"It seems that he is no longer manager of the factory. No one could tell me what has become of him."

"Got any other friends?"

"Several, your honor, but there is no use troubling them. Just fix the amount of my fine and I'll pay it by check. And right here I want to register a complaint. I tried to tell the desk sergeant about it last night; but he wouldn't let me talk. If he'd listened, we might have saved a lot of valuable time. Your honor, I've been abominably treated. I've been kidnaped, drugged, and left in the park to die of exposure."

"What's this, now?"

"Have your officers look out for three men and a girl. One is tall and dark, another is tall and heavy and rather sandy, and the third is a dwarfed Japanese. When I saw them, they all wore pink side-whiskers; but of course——"

"Ten dollars and costs," interrupted the judge. He bent a frowning gaze on me. "Better leave the dope alone. Next time you land in here, I'll give you the full extent of the law. Next case!"

"But, your honor——"

"There, there," soothed the officer in whose charge I had been placed, albeit the grip with which he led me forth by the arm was firm. "That's all right. We know all about it. We ain't goin' to let no kidnapers get you. No sir-ree! Don't you be afraid of no pink side-whiskers or nothin'."

It was useless to protest. I had made a wrong beginning. At any rate, I was free, and could do something toward straightening up the loose ends of my affairs.

The news that Mandeville had been supplanted as manager was disquieting. It meant that my records had not been discovered and that he was in disgrace. Delaying at my lodgings only long enough to exchange my bedraggled suit for fresh attire, I hastened to the Peerless works.

The office boy stared as if I had been an apparition.

"Great Scot! if it ain't old Lon'enbecker! W'y, man, we had youse in Panama by dis time. W'enja get back?"

"Frank," I whispered, dropping a coin into his hand, "how long ago was it that Mandeville left?"

"Right after youse lit out. Him and de directors had a meetin', an' w'en he come out, I see his face—it was white as paper. An' de nex' day we had a new manager. Stebbins's his name. I don't like him."

"Tell him I'm out here and would like to see him."

For at least an hour I warmed a bench in the anteroom before the new manager condescended to admit me. He was a nervous little man with disagreeable, penetrating eyes.

"Well?" he demanded brusquely.

"Mr. Stebbins," I began, "up to a week ago, I was engaged in working out the formula for a new varnish to correspond with the advertisements of Granitella. I left the completed formula in my workroom. Was it discovered?"

"I don't know," he snapped. "If you are looking for a job, the position is filled. We need only reliable men in that department."

I controlled myself to reply:

"Will you let me visit the laboratory, to see whether the formula——"

"If any of your property has been left on the premises take it out of our way."

"Very well. But I think it no more than fair to state that the Granitolla formula is complete, and——"

Impatiently he raised a hand. "That matter has all been settled. Thank Heaven, the company has been rescued from the predicament you and Mandeville placed it in!"

His brusque manner angered me. Still boiling from the new man's summary treatment, I set out to hunt up President Drake of the concern.

He received me civilly enough at his home and listened while I told of the fight Mandeville had made to enlarge the company's business by popularizing a new varnish. It was not until I reached the kidnaping incident that he made any interruption.

"You say the result toward which you had been working was complete when you left that night?"

"If Mr. Mandeville had come upon my records, he would have been able to start the manufacturing at once."

"Probably he jumped at conclusions. We hired a new chemist the day you failed to show up. He proved incompetent and was discharged as soon as a new man could be obtained."

"Did Mandeville resign?"

"Practically. He admitted the scrape into which he had plunged the company, and as Mr. Stebbins had just called upon me personally, bringing the highest recommendations, we placed him in charge—temporarily. So far he has made good. His deal with the Searchlight Company, who agreed to assume the bulk of our Granitolla outlay for exploiting a new varnish of their own, was worth more than a year's salary. Luckily, our firm name had not been mentioned in the preliminary advertisements. It relieved us of our white elephant. But go on with your story."

"There isn't anything more to tell, Mr. Drake. I was kidnaped—that's all, and made my escape only yesterday."

"Kidnaped! You are taking it mighty coolly."

After a moment's awkward hesitation, I began impulsively:

"Mr. Drake, I know who my captors were, but so far I have been unable to gain any credence. I want to say that I absolutely do not believe in their claims. They pretended, however, to be envoys from a small kingdom called Nagarusalem."

"Never heard of such a place," he responded suspiciously. "What did they want with you?"

Again I hesitated. "I—I—scarcely know how to tell this. They forced me against my will to remain their prisoner. The pretext was that I had been selected to marry the queen of their principality. It was a religious ceremony covering six or seven days—and——"

Without seeming to notice what he was doing, President Drake had been gradually pulling open the upper drawer of his desk. I understood well enough the significance of the move.

"Mr. Drake! Is it utterly impossible for me to tell this story and make it convincing? I don't believe in them; I know it must have been a hoax—but it did happen. If I went into details and told of the pink-whiskered policeman, you would have reason to disbelieve me; but I don't require you to accept that kind of rot. All I ask——"

"Yes, yes, Mr. Londenbecker. I have no doubt of your sincerity. I can well understand how the worry—and the late nights—might bring about something of this kind. A long rest will do you good. Come around after a few months and I will try to find a place for you. Just now——"

He pulled out his watch with an elaborate gesture. I had told too much of the truth again. The interview was hopeless; I withdrew.

My successor in the chemical department was all that could be desired in the way of courtesy. A brief search convinced us that my records had been utterly effaced. Very likely the man who temporarily occupied my post had thrown them away, not realizing their value.

Early the following morning I repaired to the Wolverton Detective Agency. My reputation must be cleared at any cost, and I saw no better way of accomplishing the result than by obtaining proofs of my experience.

The manager listened attentively and without comment, thereby emboldening me to give him all the details.

"That is a very strange story, Mr.—Mr. —Londenbecker," he said, in an odd, choking voice, at the close. "I take it you wish us to—er—follow up this matter and intercept the—er—royal bridal party before they leave this part of the country?"

"That was my idea."

"We shall certainly do our best, Mr. Londenbecker."

"Thank you. The party should not be difficult to trace. Of course," I added, "they will not wear the distinguishing side-whiskers. But the dwarfed Japanese and other descriptions I have furnished——"

"Leave the details to me," he interrupted. "We know how to handle these things. I will keep you posted as soon as we begin to make progress."

While I was descending the stairs, it occurred to me that there was one detail on which he might be able to furnish some early enlightenment—namely, the present whereabouts of Stephen Mandeville.

A peal of laughter from his consulting-room brought me to a pause just outside the door.

"I give you my word, Jim, that I listened to the whole story without batting an eye. Sat there and swallowed it all—pink whiskers, beautiful princess, and everything!"

"You're a good un!" came the admiring response, when they had laughed some more. "How long did it take you to get next?"

"Oh, I tumbled in a minute. First, I thought he might have a case—till he mentioned the crazy woman in the coach. Then I got a little bit suspicious, and when he came to the policeman with pink burnsides I knew the poor boob had 'em for fair. One minute he says he don't believe in it himself—and the next he tells a bigger one than ever. He thinks Jim—he thinks he's married to a queen—and that ain't all! He's married to her pink-whiskered grand vizier into the bargain! Oh, it's rich!"

"Trouble with these dope fiends," responded the other, "is that they can't write the stuff down. Why, if that story was fixed up into a comic opera, it'd make a fortune. Do you s'pose it's safe to let a nut like him run around loose? He might get dangerous."

"Shucks, no!" replied the manager. "Those kind are harmless. No use bothering to have him run in unless he gets to be a nuisance."

Heavy of heart, I turned away. And yet, as I reviewed the details of my story, I could not altogether blame the detective. Had another man related it to me, I, too, would probably have set him down as a harmless lunatic—all the more so because he doubted the story himself.

### CHAPTER V.

### ENTER ROGER CONROY.

THAT was as far as my investigations went. Several months later found me more or less permanently located in New York City. The story of my unaccountable lapse had spread, so that my prospects of securing employment in the home of Peerless paint did not appear encouraging. The employment that I found in the metropolis was irregular, but sufficient, at least, to keep the wolf in abeyance.

I had settled down, in fact, to a rather grinding existence, and tried to forget the impossible Queen, the Grand Vizier, and the dwarfed priest of Nagarusalem. Unless the plot had been deliberately designed to cost me my job, I could not account for it.

Yet ofttimes, as I sat reading in my room of an evening, a vision rose up before the pages of my book—a vision of irresistible beauty and sensuous attraction. Half closing my eyes, I saw once more a gracefully swaying, barbarically garbed figure gliding rhythmically to and fro beneath soft, shining lights, to the accompaniment of weird, tinkling strains. The faint, pungent odor of incense assailed my nostrils.

The incident which again plunged me into the vortex of adventure was embodied in that not unusual sight, a street corner gathering. As I drew near the outskirts of the crowd, the police patrol drove up, gathered in the disturber, whoever he was, and in remarkably short order was hurtling away on its noisy return trip.

"Holy smoke!" commented a newsboy on the edge of the dispersing crowd, "he cert'ny was de worst I ever see! I never knew anybody w'at had 'em worse 'an he had 'em."

Stopping the urchin, I inquired the cause of the rumpus.

"Didn't you see it! Say, mister, you missed somep'n. Feller went clean bughouse—jumped out an' stopped a lady's carriage, an' w'en de cop trew 'im off, he yelled out 'at she was de Queen o' Jerusalem—or some fool place. An' w'en dey pushed 'im in de wagon, he was babbling about pink side-w'iskers, an' I don't know w'at all. He cert'ny did have 'em somep'n fierce. An' say, he——"

But already I had started to do a Marathon down the street. There is every probability that I would have covered the entire distance to the police station on foot at top speed, if it had not been for a providential taxicab on the corner.

Half an hour later I emerged from the police station in company with a tall, good-looking, thoroly bewildered young man, who, for the twentieth time, was saying: "I don't know how to thank you—or why you should——"

"Not another word," I insisted. "You can thank me sufficiently when we get by ourselves."

"But why should you——"

Relentlessly I urged him toward the taxicab in which I had followed the patrol. With none too good grace, considering that he owed his release to my efforts, he allowed himself to be ushered into the taxi.

"Not a word," I insisted. "Not one word until we reach my room."

In the first place, I wanted time to still the excited beating of my heart. In the second, I wanted that discussion held behind closed doors.

When the door had been not only closed but locked, the young man seated himself awkwardly, his brown eyes following my every movement with suspicion.

"To begin with introductions," said I, "my name is Chris Londenbecker."

"Pleased to meet you," he responded dubiously. "I'm Roger Conroy. Can't imagine why you should have gone out of your way to help me."

"Queer business, Mr. Conroy—holding up vehicles in the streets of New York."

His only response was a smoldering glance.

"You refused to give any information at police headquarters," I added; "but the newsboys told me you were babbling something about queens and pink side-whiskers."

"There isn't a thing to tell," he responded; then added bitterly—"that you'd believe."

"I can swallow some pretty stiff yarns."

He rose and commenced pacing the narrow room. "No, you wouldn't believe my story. I've been cured of telling it. In fact, I've quit believing it myself; only—that face in the carriage——"

"Mr. Conroy," I exclaimed, "my one and only purpose in coming to your assistance was to hear this story."

"Oh!" He glanced at me as if the matter had suddenly become clear. "So you're a literary bug in search of material. Well, I can tell you a story that will almost make your hair turn—pink. I don't mind—and you may consider that this is a crazy dream."

He drew from his pocket a notebook and flashed a newspaper clipping before my eyes.

"BRIDEGROOM SKIPS ON EVE OF WEDDING.

"Mysterious Disappearance of Rising
Young Lawyer Who Was to Have
Wed Miss Imogene Tomlinson—
Bride Will Lose Fortune
as Consequence."

"I'm that bridegroom," he observed, folding the clipping away. "Notice it says: 'Bride will lose fortune as consequence.' Well, she lost it—upward of fifty thousand dollars. In the small town where we lived that was a real sum. You see, her guardian had made one of those freak wills. She wasn't to get the money unless she married before coming of age. We'd been engaged for a couple of years—sort of family arrangement—so, naturally, the date was set so that she could get the money—three days before her birthday, in fact.

"It was the evening before the hitch that it all happened. I won't go into details. I was kidnaped—that's all it amounted to. A girl with a suitcase met me as I was starting home after a visit to Imogene. She was a pretty little thing—all innocent and pathetic—and I believed her when she said she'd got lost from her uncle. I helped her find him; then he and his servant—a little dwarfed Japanese—overpowered me and—but I suppose I ought to give you more of the story. You won't understand how——"

"Pass over that part," I instructed. "What next?"

"They made the trip in two stages, as near as I can figure out. Once we stopped to eat, and I think there must have been some kind of dope in what they gave me. At any rate, the next thing I knew—I'm almost afraid to tell you this—but I found myself in bed in an unfamiliar room, while the Japanese dwarf flitted about making things tidy. And as sure as I'm Roger Conroy, that Jap was wearing false side-whiskers of the most brilliant coral!"

"Yes, yes! And his name?"

"Tatsagawa. Say, what do you know about this business, anyway?"

"Never mind. What did they do with you?"

"You'd never guess. They'd kidnaped me for the one and only purpose of marrying a queen. A real queen, mind you

—the Queen of Nagarusalem. And in the eye of their laws I'm still the Prince Consort, by Jingo!"

It was my turn to be astounded. Except that he seemed to accept the situation at its face value, our memories were identical.

"Don't hurt yourself trying to believe this," he added.

"But see here," I questioned, "did they start in on the ceremony right away?"

"Not precisely. It took them about three days to get me properly tamed. Then there was another three or four days occupied in coaching me to the part I was expected to take and getting me used to the idea of wearing pink side-whiskers. Seems it was a religious custom——"

"Never mind that."

"Well, during a week or more that they kept me penned up there, I caught an occasional glimpse of Queen Ethalind. It was she, you know, who had helped them to kidnap me. And finally, she started giving a series of dances for my benefit. Man! I've seen dancing on the stage; but never such dancing. If it hadn't been for the Grand Vizier——"

"Ah! You saw him, too?"

"Saw him! I should think I did! And I had the stiff scared to death of me. What do you think? The dirty, contemptible sneaking little runt had the cheek to insist on my going thru all this, just in order that he could marry the Queen. The secretary explained the whole——"

"Enough!" I interposed. "I can tell you the entire history of Nagarusalem, beginning with Philip the First and ending with the rise of Prince Muggleton to the post of Grand Vizier."

Conroy sprang erect.

"You mean to say," he demanded breathlessly, "that you know about this country? Where it's located, and all that?"

"I mean to say that, with a few variations, my experience is identical, word for word, with yours!"

"Eh?"

"I have seen the seven dances of the Sacred Seal. I have been joined in a mock marriage to the supposed Queen of Nagarusalem, and if there is a Prince Consort in this country, I have a full right to claim the title for myself!"

Conroy stared with an expression closely bordering on imbecility.

"Yes!" I added, not with entire truthfulness, but in order that my story might be fully equal to his own in all details. "I, too, have gazed upon that beanpole of a Grand Vizier and made him quail under my furious glance."

The last mention brought my visitor back to earth.

"The Grand Vizier," he fairly hissed, "is a wart on the face of the universe!"

Then we sat staring helplessly at each other. The situation had grown beyond us.

"Look here," demanded Conroy. "One of us must have been first. Now, I woke up on the depot platform of my own little burg on the twenty-second of September."

"Great Heavens! Why, that's the morning after I found myself trying to tell the story to the desk sergeant in the police station."

Again we stared in petrified bewilderment.

"Simultaneously!" he exploded. "But how——"

"If you hadn't told me this," he commenced again, "I'd have sworn the thing couldn't happen, didn't happen, and never would have happened except in a delirium. Even when I saw the Queen this afternoon——"

"You aren't sure of that!"

"As sure," was his impressive answer, "as I am that I gave the secretary a black eye as a souvenir of my last day. I wonder," he added fiercely, "whether that measly scoundrel of a Grand Vizier was in the carriage, too, with his squat figure, and his ridiculous round face and those unnatural side-whiskers."

An idea, fairly staggering in its significance, had occurred to me.

"See here!" I demanded wildly. "Did you ever stop the Grand Vizier on the stairs and threaten to kill him?"

"You bet I did! And say——"

"Conroy," I gasped, almost tearfully, "we've been a couple of fools! Why the Grand Vizier you threatened was me! And the Prince Muggleton I saw was—nobody else but you!"

### CHAPTER VI.

### THE TRAIL OF A QUEEN.

THERE was no doubt in the world that we had been played off neatly, each supposing the other to be in the plot. Our experiences dovetailed exactly. The secretary must have been a consummate rogue to have deceived us both so adroitly.

"Why, if we had only known," exclaimed Conroy, "the two of us could have handled them! Say, which of us deserves the title of Prince Consort?"

His eagerness gave me a hint of how matters stood. It began to dawn upon me that his manner of speaking of the Queen was anything but impersonal. In fact, he made no secret of his infatuation.

"Imogene was a mighty nice girl," he remarked in a burst of confidence, "but I'm not altogether sure we were cut out for each other. At any rate, her liking for me couldn't stand the strain of pink side-whiskers, when I tried to tell the story, and perhaps it is just as well. Now, the Queen——"

"Yes, the Queen?" I encouraged.

"Tell you what, old man!" he suddenly exploded. "We've got to find her!"

"How?" I countered. "We don't know her real name, even. I think we may as well drop the thought of there being such a nation as the secretary claimed. The thing was a hoax—for what purpose we can only conjecture. But that makes our search the more difficult."

"Well, there's the taxicab driver."

His suggestion contained a germ of sense. By strenuously conducted inquiries we succeeded, a little before midnight, in holding converse with the very chauffeur who had been stopped earlier in the day by my new-found ally.

"Sure, I remember all about it!" he exclaimed, his expression suddenly lighting with something more vindictive than mere interest. "Was you the guy that tried to pull me off the seat!"

I interposed hastily: "There was a logical explanation, my friend. But we are interested chiefly to know where you picked up the passengers you had at the time, and where you set them down?"

Absently pocketing the proffered greenback, he recalled: "Why, it was at the Century cafe I picked 'em up, and right after this guy got funny they made me turn a couple of corners and let them out in the middle of the block."

"Stung again!" groaned my companion.

"Didn't you get an inkling of who they were, or where they came from?" I persisted.

"Did I get a what? No; I don't know who they was or nothing about 'em. Good looker—the woman."

Conroy would have kept up the search all night, I verily believe, if I had not refused to accompany him. He finally agreed to retire, after I had promised faithfully to devote the morrow, after ten o'clock, to assisting him.

It seemed positively less than five minutes after I had closed my eyes that a tremendous pounding wakened me to a sense of irritable consciousness.

The sun was pouring into the court, altho it had not reached my window. The watch hanging by its chain beside my bed announced that the hour was six a. m. Grumbling, I hastily wrapped a bathrobe around my pajamas and shuffled across the floor.

"It's me—Conroy!" came the excited explanation, as I turned the knob. "What do you know about this!"

He burst in, brandishing a newspaper before my sleepy eyes.

"Look! Great Scott, man! Read it!"

The headlines to which he pointed were emblazoned above the likeness of a very pretty and vivacious young lady whom I could not recall having seen before. But the heading caught my undivided attention.

"DRIVEN INSANE BY BEAUTY OF
COMIC OPERA STAR!

"Infatuated Young Man Makes Wild
Attempt to Stop Machine Occupied by
Signorina de Rolleri, Whose
Beauty and Acting in 'The
Emerald Throne' Have
Taken New York by
Storm."

"Late yesterday afternoon, the Signorina Fiametta de Rolleri, star of 'The Emerald Throne' company, received a shock, when her car was held up in broad daylight by a young man thought to have become infatuated over her beauty and dancing. The name given by the assailant at police headquarters was Roger Conroy; but he was released upon the intervention of friends before further details could be learned.

"Signorina de Rolleri is a new and brilliant star whose previous career is shrouded in mystery. Two weeks ago she was unknown; today she is the sensation of New York."

And more to the same effect, the stereotyped patter of the professional press agent, who in this case had seized upon and made copy of Conroy's escapade.

"Well," I observed, "it seems you jumped at conclusions. This picture certainly doesn't resemble Queen Ethalind in the least, and as for——"

"Of course it doesn't. No more does it look like the face I saw in the auto."

I doubted the accuracy of his recognition; but nothing would do but that he must look up the actress.

"You and I are more interested in this than we may think," he went on darkly. "Look what you lost—your job and reputation. Look what I lost—a promising law practice and a bride. Why did they palm us off on each other as the one and only Grand Vizier, and force us to spend days cooped up in that old house? Why did they pick us out above all other people?"

"There certainly must be something more behind it than appears," I admitted. "But the truth is——" I paused in some embarrassment. He seemed to surmise my difficulty.

"I've got a little money to go on," he assured me. "And I am willing to spend every cent of it hunting this mystery down. Are you with me?"

"Of course; count me in," I assured him, in relief.

"Then let's get busy," he exclaimed impulsively. "I give you five minutes to climb into your duds."

### CHAPTER VII.

### WE ASSIST AT A KIDNAPING.

OUR interview with the theatrical star's manager, that morning, was short, but far from sweet. He met all our inquiries evasively, and admitted that the published picture was a mistake. No; his star, unlike the majority, was averse to publicity, and her address was not to be had for any consideration, which, of course, strengthened our suspicions.

There was nothing to do but to wait for the evening performance of "The Emerald Throne."

The play was having an outrageous run. We found it impossible to secure decent seats for love or money, but finally garnered two in the top gallery by paying an exorbitant speculator's price.

The play was one of those airy, plotless nothings which spring up on Broadway like exotic hothouse plants and wither just as quickly. The furore over it was owing—so the reviewers had it—to the wonderful freshness and charm of the mysterious star, who had created a series of dances which were like so many pearls strung together upon a narrow thread of plot.

Conroy wore his program to limp shreds and gripped the arms of his seat until they creaked under the pressure but it was not until half thru the first act that the star was scheduled to make her appearance.

She entered in a chariot shaped like a magnified seashell, drawn by six butterfly-winged nymphs in gauzy costume. A roar of applause swelled up, quickly dying away as the languid beauty who reclined in the hollow of the shell slowly arose and stepped forth.

The orchestra struck up a lively air. The Emerald Princess pirouetted before her admiring courtiers, then glided into the graceful undulations of the dance.

She was graceful and lively; she was garbed in a manner to make the most of her buxom figure; but most assuredly she was not the person we had known as Queen Ethalind.

My companion grew limp. I said nothing, for I knew the sudden dashing of all expectation was hard on him. As the curtain fell upon the first act, he laid a spiritless hand upon my shoulder and felt for his hat.

"No use sticking here," he said wearily. "Come on."

But I had been growing more and more aware of a vague restlessness in the audience, and held him back. There had been whispering and rustling and shuffling of feet, and as the curtain went down, something like a murmur of disappointment. Now there stepped in front of the drop a heavyset man in brown, who raised a hand for silence.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he began impressively: "The management regretted very much the necessity of raising the curtain this evening upon a cast which failed to include the Signorina de Rolleri."

Cry from the gallery: "Give us back our money!"

The man in brown raised his eyes imperturbably.

"Ladies and gentlemen, I have just received this telegram: 'Have been unavoidably detained by automobile accident. Am now on road from New Rochelle. Will reach theater in time for second act. Hold curtain if possible. SIGNORINA FIAMETTA DE ROLLERI.'"

He retired amid applause.

Need I say that we waited, or that the interval seemed one of ages?

At last the curtain arose, revealing caverns and gigantic growths of ocean fungus among which seemingly floated, as if in the depths of real water, great staring-eyed members of the finny species and sprawling starfish. The shadowy outlines of a half-buried ship's prow loomed up against the background.

In the mouth of the gloomiest cavern slowly appeared a glow of rosy light. As this became brighter, it disclosed the outlines of a solitary figure reposing just within the entrance.

The audience went insane. The Emerald Princess—the real Emerald Princess this time—bowed graciously to the applause, bowed again and yet again.

Was she the object of our search?

Regarding her from a distance and thru an artificial mist, I did not feel entirely certain. Conroy's attitude was doubtful. But presently she began the dance of the water-sprite—a strangely simple little movement which she managed to invest with a weird attraction all its own—and neither of us could longer doubt I had witnessed that dance before.

The scene changed. There were some other dances, which increased our certainty.

I made no attempt to restrain Conroy when the curtain descended, nor did I inquire his intentions as we emerged from the theater.

The stage entrance was located at the end of a narrow, poorly illuminated blind alley. One solitary light burned above the narrow doorway, but a couple of machines were already within its radius, and a third drew up as we approached.

A heavily built, foppishly dressed man, with a general English air in the cut of his clothes and the droop of his long, sandy mustache, stepped from this machine bearing a huge bouquet. He was already expostulating with the doorkeeper when we arrived.

"Nothing doing," responded the burly guardian of the greenroom. "Orders is stricter than ever tonight."

"But—my man! I have an engagement with—I'm sure you'll let me enter when I tell you her name—with Miss Mabel Blossom, fourth from the end, first row."

"You Johnnies 'll have to blow," responded the doorkeeper, including us as we peeped over the Englishman's shoulder. "It ain't no use. There don't nobody get by; that is flat. I couldn't let you in if you had an order from the manager hisself."

"This is beastly annoying!" exclaimed the bearer of the bouquet.

"I'd like to have you think that over," interposed Conroy. He drew forth his pocketbook ostentatiously.

"Nothing doing!" repeated the doorkeeper, in a threatening tone. "Think I want to lose my job?"

We turned away in disappointment. The only resource now was to lie in wait for her outside.

"My dear fellahs," broke in the Englishman, approaching us a moment later, "I've been talking with our stubborn friend, and he happened to make the remark that he wouldn't run the risk of losing his bally place for a less consideration than a hundred—bones, I believe he called them. Now, I don't know how much of an object it may be to you; but——"

"You're on, old sport!" exclaimed Conroy. "I'll put up half."

He counted out fifty dollars, worth of greenbacks and stuffed them into the Englishman's hand.

"By Jove, you know!" exulted the latter. "That was a bully good idea of mine, wasn't it?"

A moment later, the three of us silently filed inside, while the incorruptible guardian of the portal sped away down the alley. He didn't wait to be fired.

Amid the general confusion in the wings we attracted little attention. The Englishman promptly disappeared, presumably to deliver his bouquet in person, while we waited uncertainly, afraid to ask questions for fear we would be thrown out, and not knowing how to find the object of our quest, now that we were within doors.

A perspiring man in shirt sleeves brushed past us and scribbled a few words on a scrap of paper torn from his notebook.

"Here, boy," he called; "take this to Rolleri's dressing-room. Quick!"

The messenger dived toward the dressing-room like a shot, but we were close at his heels, and arrived in time to identify the door. I was tingling with excitement. This was the most unconventional thing I had attempted since robbing a watermelon patch in my boyhood.

My companion rapped very gently on the door. It was opened a scant two inches by a suspicious colored maid.

"Is this the Signorina's room?" said Conroy.

"Yes; but she can't under no circumstances——"

"Tell her," he said insistently, "that there are two gentlemen with pink side-whiskers out in the hall who would like a word with her."

"Dey's two crazy gem'mens out in de hall wants to see you," called the maid, stridently.

Without waiting for the answer, Conroy tried again, enforcing his request with a gold coin.

"Repeat it to her just as I say: 'There are two gentlemen wearing pink side-whiskers out in the hall. We insist on being admitted at once.'"

This brought results. After an interval, the door was opened grudgingly to admit us.

She stood in the center of the narrow reception-room, barbarically beautiful, with scarcely rouged cheeks, a coiffure studded with glittering stones, and a pearl-gray robe concealing her figure except for one bare shoulder and arm.

"Clara," she instructed the maid, "step out and tell Mr. Jerome that I insist upon his making the change we talked of in the finale. Now, sirs," as the colored girl obediently disappeared, "will you explain what you mean by this intrusion?"

I thought I detected a tremor in her voice, and all at once I felt like a brute, but Conroy gave no evidence of relenting.

"Signorina," he began, "if we are persecuting you, it is unintentional; and at any rate, I can't recall that any pity was shown to us when we were in a similar position."

"You must be crazy. You are the madman who tried to stop my automobile yesterday."

A new shade of emotion passed over Conroy's face.

"Signorina," he said, with a tightening of the muscles around his jaw, "I'll come straight to the point. There were certain mysteries connected with our brief acquaintance with you as Queen of the coral-whiskered people. I would like to have some of those matters straightened out."

"I—you—I don't know what you are talking about. I am not a queen. You have no right to force yourselves upon me and make such demands. Leave me

(Continued on Page 8.)

# THE SMUGGLER

## Or, WE THREE GIRLS

### By Ella Middleton Tybout

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## CHAPTER XVI.

"ELISE, wake up."

Gabrielle, looking unnaturally tall in her yellow kimono with long-legged storks and large chrysanthemums straggling indiscriminately across it, stood beside my bed—the lighted candle in her hand held at an angle which caused the grease to drip upon my face and materially assist in rousing me.

"What's the matter?" I demanded, sitting indignantly upright. "I'd only just gone to sleep."

"Hush—don't make a noise. There is some one in the house."

"What?"

I was wide enough awake now, and the events of the preceding evening flashed across my mind with unwelcome distinctness.

"At least, we think so. I heard a noise and waked Elizabeth, and we both listened. It was in the dining-room, and oh, Elise——"

"Lady Edith's pearls!" I finished in an awed whisper, adding as an afterthought: "Where is Elizabeth?"

"Gone to wake Mary Anne. Do get up and put on your wrapper; we might as well be prepared."

I have since asked Gabrielle if she thought it unconventional to receive burglars in a robe de nuit; at that time, however, I did not question the motive of her command, but reached obediently for my slippers, and was enveloped in my pink kimono when Elizabeth appeared in her blue one.

Elizabeth was very pale and looked as tho she had encountered a regiment of ghosts, as she collapsed in a crumpled heap on the foot of my bed.

"She wasn't there," she said in a frightened whisper; "her bed had not been touched, and—oh, I'm afraid!"

We all were, for that matter, and huddled close together, listening intently. Mary Anne, a tower of strength in any emergency, had failed us in our hour of need, and we felt weakly incompetent as well as alarmed.

We listened with strained attention and every sense alert, dreading the unknown, yet still more fearful of the silence which enveloped the house like a pall. We heard nothing, however, except the sound of the waves, usually soothing in its regularity, but tonight accompanied with an overpowering sense of loneliness and a realization of our helplessness and complete isolation.

But as the slow moments passed and nothing happened, we grew gradually calmer, and even ventured to creep noiselessly into the hall and lean over the banisters, ready for instant flight back to my room at the first suspicion of a movement below—there to barricade the door and insure personal safety if possible. Again we listened, and again nothing happened.

"Would you be afraid to go downstairs?" suggested Gabrielle, always the most valiant. "It seems all right."

We were afraid, and said so emphatically.

"Of course," said Elizabeth, after another period of silence, "we might have been mistaken about the noise. But, then, there's Mary Anne—what of her?"

Gabrielle sat flat upon the floor, mingled relief and dismay in her face.

"That's just it!" she exclaimed. "It was Mary Anne."

"What do you mean?"

"The noise—it was Mary Anne. Don't you see? She has been deceiving us about her son; he is still hanging about somewhere, and she goes out at night and meets him, so it is no wonder she was not in her room."

"Why, of course"—Elizabeth accepted the theory without question, while I maintained an uneasy silence. "I'm so relieved—but I'm sorry, too. I hate to think she has deceived us again."

Gabrielle snuffed the wick of her candle and rose to the occasion, for, as she said afterward, she felt herself more than equal to Mary Anne, altho she might perhaps flunk a masked burglar.

"Now, I'll tell you our best plan," she said decidedly. "We'll go downstairs and see if she has left a door or window open (as, of course, she must), and then we will lock it and wait until we hear her coming, and then——"

"Well," I inquired, as she paused irresolutely, "what then?"

"Why, then we'll confront her."

Gabrielle spoke firmly, and we felt as tho the act of confronting must be in the nature of the ancient ordeal of red-hot plowshares.

"Let us go right down," she continued, "before she has a chance to come in. Both of you get candles and come on."

"I don't quite like it," demurred Elizabeth. "Suppose she brings that man with her? He might not object to three other murders if he thought it necessary."

I got my candle in puzzled silence. Gabrielle's explanation was very probable, and I fervently hoped it might prove to be true, but I had a mental vision of the figures at the door of the boathouse, and my heart sank within me.

"Get your watch," advised Gabrielle, "and your pins and things. I've got all mine in this chamois bag, except the gold beads; they wouldn't go in, so I'll just carry them. I'm not afraid, but I would rather have my things with me, somehow."

I collected my small store of valuables, and we formed a procession of three and ventured downstairs, walking softly, as tho afraid to disturb some one.

With every step our confidence returned. We tried the front door and found it closed and bolted; the windows in the hall and living-room were securely fastened; the dining-room also appeared impregnable; and when we found the door to the safe tightly closed, I was beyond measure relieved, and almost ready to laugh at my suspicions.

In the kitchen we found the cellar door open, and debated whether we should lock it and thus prevent Mary Anne's return, or wait and greet her in disapproving array.

"Let us listen," suggested Gabrielle, and sat down upon the top step to carry out her suggestion.

Then occurred the accident to which I referred in the very beginning. She held her gold beads in her hand, and somehow managed to break the catch and away they went. We could hear them rolling down into the cellar step by step, and Gabrielle was at first motionless with surprise, then as usual prepared for immediate action.

"I'm going after them," she announced, literally rising to the occasion.

"Down there?" shuddered Elizabeth. "Oh, no! Wait till morning [illegible]"

"I spent every cent of Cousin Lucy's check on those beads," said Gabrielle, folding her kimono about her and preparing to descend, "and I'm going to pick them up right away. Wait till morning, indeed! You might suppose they were pebbles."

We sighed apprehensively, but prepared to follow our intrepid friend, feeling that we must share whatever fate was in store for her, as well as help collect her property. So we went carefully down the steps, holding our candles well before us.

Those miserable beads had rolled to the most remote places, of course, and we got so interested in looking for them we almost forgot to be afraid.

Suddenly, however, Elizabeth gave a stifled scream, which was more of a gasp, after all, and shrank back against the wall.

"There is some one in here," she whispered. "I know it."

"How do you know?"

Gabrielle tried to speak boldly, but the hand which held the candle shook until a little shower of melted wax fell upon the floor.

"I was feeling—under the steps"—Elizabeth found articulation difficult—"when I touched hair—human hair."

We gazed at one another in abject terror, unable for the moment to speak or move; then Elizabeth, whose nerves were completely unstrung, swayed suddenly as tho she were going to faint.

"I'm afraid," she gasped—"awfully afraid. It was hair, and—oh, dear! what shall we do?"

She began to sob in a hopeless kind of way, in which I felt much inclined to join, when I heard a suppressed exclamation, followed by a scrambling sound and the simultaneous flash of two dark-lanterns, as a man advanced from the back of the cellar, while another appeared from beneath the steps.

Instinctively we drew close together, and when we afterward compared notes found we had each tried to scream but could not.

"Don't be frightened," said a voice which sounded strangely familiar; "it's only us, Blake and I."

The girls stared with mingled relief and amazement, but I looked the other way, for I felt a curious sensation of personal disgrace, and as tho I could not bear to meet their eyes.

"But," said Elizabeth, at last—"but——"

"It is odd, isn't it?" said Mr. Bennett, with a laugh he tried hard to make natural. "I'm—I'm most awfully sorry you happened to come down. We did not want you to know anything about it."

He paused abruptly, conscious that he was floundering badly, and turned to his companion.

"Tell them, Blake," he commanded. "This thing has got to be explained, and, after all, it's your business, not mine."

"Yes," said Gabrielle, in her most high and mighty voice; "it does seem to need explaining."

I admired her very much just then, for it is not every woman who can look dignified and imposing when enveloped in a kimono, with a spluttering candle in her hand, and a dearth of stiff petticoats to sustain her moral backbone.

Mr. Blake cast an anxious glance toward the recess from which he had emerged.

"One moment," he said, then disappeared into the darkness, whence we plainly heard a subdued whispering.

"Are there more of you?" demanded Gabrielle, but with rather a forlorn quaver in her voice instead of the note of stern interrogation she had intended.

"It's all right," said Gordon Bennett. "On my honor, Miss Gabrielle, it's all right."

"Your honor?"

I had not intended to speak; the words escaped before I was aware of it. He turned and looked at me steadily, and again I involuntarily averted my eyes.

"On my honor," he repeated.

"Now," said Mr. Blake, returning, "if you will kindly come upstairs, I am ready to explain, but I fear I must cause you some pain, or at least a shock."

We went up to the living-room, Elizabeth and I very conscious of our dishabille and inclined to shrink into dark corners, Gabrielle stalking majestically on in front with disgust and disapproval written in capital letters across her back, and indignation hanging from her shoulder blades.

"Well?" she said coldly, after a moment's silence.

"First," said Mr. Blake, with a note of calm authority in his voice, "I must ask you to listen to my story without interruptions, and to accept for the time being any statements I may make. Later I shall be in a position to prove them."

"I hope so," murmured Gabrielle, plainly unimpressed.

Mr. Blake handed her a chair with the same careful courtesy which had hitherto marked his intercourse with us, and waited until she was seated before saying anything more. Gabrielle sat rigidly upright, but suddenly remembered that her feet, encased in bedroom slippers, were minus stockings, and therefore drew them quickly under the folds of her kimono, which hasty act was rather refreshing, since it proved her but mortal, after all.

"I do not suppose," he began, in the calm, level tone so irritating when one's excitement is at fever heat, "you will believe me when I say that Mrs. Bundy's emeralds are in your safe. Please don't take the trouble to deny it, for I know I am speaking the truth.

"Also, I wish to say that they were placed there by the woman you have received and entertained as Lady Edith Campbell, but who is in reality a notorious character and badly wanted by the police."

"I don't believe it."

It was Elizabeth who spoke, and her words were freighted with sincere conviction.

"I did not expect you to. It is true, nevertheless. This woman is known as Nell Simms, and her career has been marvelous. For some years she was—well, associated with a famous criminal named James Kilroy, who gave the police a long, hard chase before his capture. He had many strings to his bow, not the least among them the smuggling of diamonds and other articles none too honestly acquired; since his arrest this woman has directed the business. She is clever—wonderfully clever."

There was sincere, if unwilling, admiration in his tone, and he paused thoughtfully before resuming his story.

"It has been my business this summer to look up this matter of smuggling, and I have followed the history of this woman as closely as I could. After the arrest of her chosen companion she married the man you know as Lord Wilfrid Campbell, who is a well-known thief and a member of the small and select band of smugglers, but who is far from being as clever as she. He is also the son of your servant, Mary Anne Brown."

Across my mind rushed the recollection of the conversation I had overheard in the cellar, and the memory of the man's voice, certain inflections of which had haunted me with their familiarity. For some reason I looked across at Gordon Bennett, only to find him watching me intently, an anxious expression in his blue eyes, where relief was mingled with sympathy. I wondered if he knew what I had been thinking, and immediately looked away again.

"The son of your servant," continued Mr. Blake's even voice, "and a dangerous character—wanted for murder in Montreal. These people, young ladies, have used you for their own purposes. This cottage you live in belongs to them, and you were put here as a buffer to avert suspicion. Your servant was sent here to watch you and drug you when necessary; your boathouse was used to conceal their boats, and your cellar to store their goods. A passage at the back—hidden by the empty dry-goods box—leads into the boathouse. With the man's mother as your servant and under their control, it was easy for them to carry on whatever operations they chose, and to baffle the secret service. But your safety, even your lives, were in danger."

He paused as tho there was more to come which he hardly knew how to say, but Gabrielle interrupted him, starting from her chair and standing tall and erect before him.

"And do you expect us to believe this extraordinary story?" she inquired slowly.

"It is true."

"It is not true. We know there are jewels in that safe. Lady Edith put them there after the robbery at the hotel, because she was afraid of losing them. But they are pearls, not emeralds, and tomorrow I will ask her to show them to you."

"I do not wish to see them.

"I do not know, Mr. Blake, what you were doing in our cellar tonight. It seems a very strange place for a guest, but no doubt you can offer some satisfactory explanation of your intentions. We are waiting for it; your unwarrantable attack upon our friends hardly seems sufficient reason for your presence here at this hour."

Mr. Blake looked at his watch, then replied very calmly.

"Your friends," he said, with a slight emphasis, "will return here tonight. We are waiting for them. We are sorry, as Mr. Bennett has already said, that you discovered us, for we meant to conduct the thing quietly."

"It is impossible," said Gabrielle. "I—we—why, I know you must be mistaken."

"You can see for yourself," he returned. "I must ask you to allow me to put out the lights."

"I will not do it."

"But, Miss Gabrielle, you really must," interrupted Gordon Bennett quickly. "So much depends upon it! If we are wrong, we will apologize in sackcloth and ashes. Tell her it is the only thing to do, Miss Elizabeth."

We finally agreed, and hid behind the portiere at the dining-room door, feeling wretchedly guilty ourselves, as well as disloyal to our absent friends.

I do not know how long we stood there in the dark, but it seemed an age, as I distinctly felt the thumping of my heart and listened with strained attention for a sound from the surrounding darkness.

At last it came. A stealthy step, a subdued rustle of skirts, a whispered word of caution, and we were aware that some one had entered the dining-room and stood so near the sheltering portiere that it moved slightly. We could hear a low voice command some one to go to the foot of the stairs and listen for movements above. Then si-

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"There's a Reason"

lence again, and a whisper from Mary Anne that everything was quiet.

A faint light appeared thru the opening of the portiere, and, parting it still further, we saw two figures; one, a man, on his knees at the door of the safe, while the other, a woman, held the lantern. Her back was toward us, but we knew only one person with that wealth of golden hair, slim, graceful figure, and those dazzling white shoulders enhanced by the low-cut black gown. Elizabeth's fingers closed tightly on my arm, and I knew she too had recognized Lady Edith Campbell.

The man bungled at the lock, and she spoke sharply to him, her voice hard and stinging. He muttered something, but she did not answer, for the door of the safe swung open, disclosing the box she had placed there in its wrappings of soft white paper. Eagerly she bent to get it, but as she took it in her hands a whistle blew shrilly, hasty steps approached, and the room suddenly seemed full of people and lights.

The man sprang to his feet with an oath, but his arms were seized by two men in uniform, who in terms more forceful than polite admonished him to keep quiet and make no trouble.

And the woman—Lady Edith? She stood erect, with head flung back and blazing eyes. A scarlet spot flamed in her cheeks, glowing brilliantly at first, then fading to marble whiteness as she looked at the array against her. For a moment she said nothing; then, turning to Mr. Blake, she spoke in an even, mechanical voice.

"I congratulate you upon the success of your coup."

He came nearer and held out his hand authoritatively.

"I will relieve you of that box," he said.

"I will not give it to you."

"I should regret to use force with a woman."

But we could bear no more, and with one accord pushed aside the curtain and entered the room.

"It isn't true!" cried Elizabeth, rushing to her side. "Say it isn't true, and we will believe you."

"Even now, in the face of everything, would you believe me?"

"Yes," I said; "we would indeed. It is your word against theirs—why should we not believe you? Only say it is not true. The box is yours, but why did you get it this way? You had only to tell us you wanted it."

"You hear?" she said, standing tall and erect, her eyes on a level with Mr. Blake's as she looked at him, ignoring his outstretched hand. "My word against yours, and they believe me—me!"

"I should regret to use force," he repeated. "The box, if you please."

"Stop!" said Gabrielle, quickly. "Lady Edith, may I take the box? Thank you. Surely it is a simple matter for you to satisfy this man. Let us open it and prove him wrong once for all, and then neither you nor I need ever see him again."

She unwrapped the first layer of paper, then paused uncertainly.

"Tell me they are yours," she said in a queer, choked voice—"your mother's pearls—and I will believe you. Only look at me and tell me so."

The great brown eyes looked into Gabrielle's clear hazel ones steadily for a minute perhaps, then faltered; the long lashes drooped upon her cheek, and she turned aside, speechless—self-confessed a thief.

Gabrielle, with a sigh which was almost a sob, handed the box to Mr. Blake. He bowed gravely, removed the cover, and Mrs. Bundy's famous emeralds glittered in their bed of jeweler's cotton. As long as I live I shall hate emeralds, for they can but recall that most painful scene, bringing vividly before me the averted face, and bent golden head, of our once loved friend.

"Surely," said Gordon Bennett, "there is no use in prolonging this scene."

"None whatever," agreed Mr. Blake, making a sign to the officers who held the man I even now think of as Lord Wilfrid.

"I arrest you," said the officer, "for the murder of Harry Graham."

Something flashed in the light, and we heard a sharp click, accompanied by a suppressed scream from Mary Anne.

"Not that!" she cried. "Oh, good Lord! not that! Don't put the 'andcuffs on 'im."

"Be quiet," her son said. "Don't you see the game is up?"

She did not heed him, but stood before the officers with raised hand and a certain dignity of carriage which commanded attention in spite of her gingham apron and round red face.

"Aye," she said; "the murder of Mr. Graham. 'E done it—'e struck the blow—but why? Ask the woman beside 'im, 'er with the soft 'ands and the yellow 'air. Ask 'er why he done it. Ain't she 'is wife? Ain't 'e lived and breathed and worked fur 'er ever sence the evil day he fust seen 'er—the day 'e come to me and told me 'e was a-going to take up a trade and live honest and respectable? Wot did she do fur 'im? She smiled on 'im and she coaxed 'im, with 'er sweet voice and pretty ways; she said she couldn't live wi'out 'im, and more, too. And she told 'im 'ow rich she was, and 'ow easy she made 'er money—takin' whatever she laid 'er 'ands on, and smuggling jools and sich acrost the border to 'er friends in the States. Wot did she marry 'im fur? She didn't love 'im——"

The man made a sudden motion, but the officer laid a restraining hand upon his arm, and Mary Anne continued, pouring out the words in a steady stream which admitted of no interruption.

"She wanted somebody to do 'er dirty work, that's why she married 'im, and tired enough of 'im she got, fur all the gold key she gave 'im an' the cuff button which I thought I'd die when I seen it in yer 'ands, Miss Elise. Was there a stormy night she didn't send 'im out on the ocean wi' a boatload fur the other side, carin' not a bit whether 'e ever come back or not? Did she care fur anything but 'erself?

"Don't I know 'ow fur years, ever sence she fust seen 'im, she's made that pore dead man work fur 'er? An honest man 'e was, too, at fust, with a wife and child, but wot did she care? 'E was crazy about 'er, and once I heard 'im say 'e'd foller 'er to purgatory and wuss, and 'e left 'is wife and child whenever she called 'im, which she did wi' a lock o' 'air and some fool verse. She liked 'im, too—liked 'is fine figger and 'andsome face, and when he come around she 'ad smiles and to spare, with nothing left fur Willy but black looks and sharp words. Oh, I know!"

"Will some one stop the woman?" said Mr. Blake, helplessly; but Mary Anne had more to say, and went close to her daughter-in-law, addressing her directly.

"When you sent fur 'im this summer," she said, "and 'e come as usual, you didn't like it because he brought 'is wife—pore, pale, homely little thing—so you was extra sweet to 'im nights when you met in the boathouse, and he sailed you out on the sea, you two alone, and my boy here left behind, eatin' 'is 'eart out with love and jealousy. And you made a plan, you two, so's you could be together alwiz, fur you thought you couldn't live apart, you said. So 'e was to leave 'is wife fur good and all and go abroad, and you was to join 'im there, fust lettin' the police in Montreal know how they could git Willy—git 'im fur somethin' 'e done because you told 'im to. But you wanted to close up the bizness 'ere fust, you said, and git the emeralds safely landed, so's you would be sure of the money they'd bring. And Willy wasn't to git a cent, fur you needed it yerself, but 'e thought 'e had 'em, fur you give 'im a box jest like it one night, and started 'im and Mr. Graham off fur the other shore. You never thought, tho, when you two was talkin' in the boathouse jest before they sailed, that me and Willy was in the passageway listenin' to you. We 'eard jest 'ow Mr. Graham was to land 'im with the empty box, and sail away immediate, leavin' 'im caught hard and fast. Well you knowed 'e would never peach on you."

She paused and swallowed convulsively.

"So Willy went out in the boat alone with Mr. Graham, and with 'is 'eart black wi' rage and passion. And 'e struck the man meanin' to stun 'im, per'aps. But 'e killed 'im—'e killed 'im. And I say now, and God in 'eaven knows I'm right, that this woman murdered 'Arry Graham, not my boy—not my boy!"

"Officer," said Mr. Blake's quiet voice, "remove the prisoners."

The officer now approached the woman and held the handcuffs toward her, but she shrank away against the wall.

"Not that!" she cried, with the first note of appeal her voice had contained. "Not that! I will go quietly. Not that!"

"Then go," Mr. Blake said sternly, "and remember resistance is useless. There are other men outside, and the Government boat is at the slip. Go."

She turned once and looked at us, as she walked between the two officers to the front door, and paused uncertainly.

"Good-by," she said very gently. "You would have believed me, and I thank you. I—I am glad to have known you. Please forget me, and—good-by."

The train of her black gown swept the floor as she crossed the hall, but she did not look back again; we heard the door close, and steps cross the veranda, and then Mr. Blake replaced the cover on the glittering emeralds and again wrapped them in soft white paper.

"And this," he said to Gabrielle, "explains our presence in your cellar tonight. I hope you are convinced I spoke the truth."

But Gabrielle was on the couch, her face hidden in the cushions, her dignity a thing of the past.

"Go away," she said in a smothered voice—"go away, and never, never, let me see your face again."

"What have we done?" he inquired, turning to his friend with a puzzled air.

Elizabeth now had the floor, and the mantle of dignity descended upon her.

"I think," she remarked frigidly, "we need not trouble you to stay any longer. We are quite accustomed to being alone—we prefer to be alone."

Gordon Bennett turned helplessly to me, but it was now my turn to be haughty and unappeased. Even under the circumstances, I could not let the others distance me.

"I do not think there is anything more to say, Mr. Bennett," I returned loftily. "I quite agree with my friends."

"It seems," he remarked, turning to Mr. Blake, "as tho we might as well go home."

When they reached the door, however, he returned and stood before me, hat in hand, and a very determined aspect about the chin.

"I want to tell you," he said, "that I found the scarf-pin on the slip. It was a sleeve button dropped by the man you call Lord Wilfrid, and the clew Mr. Blake was looking for. I had promised him not to admit to any one where I got it—therefore I lied, as you know. He had it set as a pin, and wished to try the effect on the woman. You know how she gave herself away when she saw it, for you also were watching her. The gold key is the badge of this particular band of smugglers, and they all wear it in various ways. Your servant, Mary Anne, was more sinned against than sinning, and will be allowed to go free. I know you would wish this."

He paused suggestively. I made no reply.

"I think that is all," he concluded, "except to say that if I can at any time be of service to you, or if, for any reason, you want to see me, I hope you will let me know. Until then I shall be careful not to intrude."

The hall door slammed with some emphasis, and again we listened to steps crossing the veranda. Then, simultaneously and without restraint, we began to cry, while Mary Anne in the kitchen sobbed heavily.

This did us all good, and when at last we opened the windows and looked out, the ocean sparkled and glittered in the morning sun and the whole world smiled at us just as it had so often done before.

At the point of the island a small, dark object moved swiftly along; we recognized the Government boat, and watched it with swimming eyes and trembling lips until it made the turn and disappeared.

Gabrielle pointed to the foam in its wake with a hand that shook slightly.

"There goes Lady Edith," she said; and we looked out over the empty ocean in silence.

## CHAPTER XVII.

WE WERE going home. Our trunks were packed and our passage engaged. We told each other we were glad to go, but if the truth were known, we were all very melancholy and wandered around picking up stray last articles in a resigned silence which grew more and more depressing as the afternoon advanced.

"It might have been clear, our last day," observed Elizabeth, flattening her nose against the window-pane as she peered out into the gray drizzle which harmonized so well with our state of mind.

"It is like our first week on the island," replied Gabrielle. "Do you remember how we went out into the rain and found the cottage? It seems a thousand years ago."

"Dear little house!" said Elizabeth, almost tearfully. "I can't help loving it. After all, it was nice while it lasted."

We echoed her sigh; this was our last day, and it was raining. The ocean looked gray and angry, and the wind blew so mournfully that at last Gabrielle cast herself upon the couch and refused to be comforted.

It was then I announced my intention of walking to the village, to get any mail which might have accumulated in the two days since we had visited the postoffice. So I got my rain-coat and umbrella, and as I fastened my veil I heard a gloomy voice from the next room.

"What have I done with my life? When I get back to Washington I intend to make a fresh start. I will read to the blind, and——"

Smothering the first inclination to laugh which I had had for some days, I left Elizabeth to struggle with the blue devils which had got possession of her alter ego, and went up to the village.

I was glad I went, for, heavy tho the atmosphere undoubtedly was, it seemed less depressing than our pretty little rooms, and, besides, I wanted to be alone. So I got the mail, and wandered slowly back along the familiar path, with my heart strangely heavy and a very suspicious lump in my throat, which made me thankful I was not obliged to talk to any one.

When I got to the steps leading down to our little slip, I paused and looked wistfully toward it, but the fog was so thick I could see nothing.

"I'm going down," I remarked decidedly, as tho some one had objected.

And I went down, impelled by some irresistible force. The boathouse door stood wide open now, and only the two little boats inside showed traces of its recent occupancy. I looked at them, vaguely wondering how they could seem so calm and unconcerned when so much of importance had been connected with them, and then walked to the end of the slip and sat dejectedly down upon the raised ledge, my dripping umbrella over my shoulder and my damp skirts falling abjectly about me. I am very sure that never before or since have I looked so forlorn or so utterly friendless.

I felt friendless, too, and as tho nobody wanted me, and I wanted to be wanted, altho I was not just sure by whom. So I sat, cold and miserable, on the ledge, and to this day I don't know whether the moisture on my face came from the clouds above or my own two eyes, but I am inclined to believe it was a combination, and I took solid comfort in the fact that I was exceedingly uncomfortable and would probably catch a heavy cold.

I sat with my face turned toward the ocean, so I did not see a figure follow me down the steps, cross the slip, and stand directly behind me, quite obscured by my umbrella, which I held very loosely indeed until a sudden puff of wind almost wrenched it away from me.

I clutched at the handle in an incompetent sort of way, and tried to lower it, since it was difficult to hold and I was already very wet, but the catch would not work, and I struggled vainly with it until a strong brown hand quietly closed over mine and I recognized the signet ring with the Bennett crest.

"Allow me," he remarked, just as he had said to Gabrielle when she was fishing for the comb.

I could only stare dumbly, all at once acutely conscious of my bedraggled appearance. He lowered the umbrella and calmly seated himself upon the ledge beside me, raising his own as he did so.

"This," he said, adjusting it at an angle which let cold water drip down my neck, "will shield us both."

I wriggled ungratefully, and tried to assume a careless air.

"I'm not much shielded," I replied, "but, then, I did not ask to be."

"But you wanted to?"

I was not prepared to answer his question, so parried it by another.

"Where did you come from?"

"From the village. I saw you there, and followed humbly in the rear, as a culprit should. But, on my soul, I don't know what I've done, except——"

"Don't," I interrupted; "I do not wish to talk about it."

"Well, I won't. But you might admit you were just a little unreasonable that night. We really meant well."

"We are going away," I said abruptly.

"I know."

"And we're never coming back any more."

"Oh, yes, you are—next summer."

"Never any more."

"I am coming back next summer," he said positively, "but not by myself, I hope. My island is a jolly little place, but it's a bit lonely, even when a fellow wants to rest after his winter's work."

"What is your work?" I inquired, suddenly conscious that none of us knew or had cared to ask.

"Well, I draw a bit sometimes, just enough to keep the jam-pot full, since my parents insured my bread and butter."

I sat up straight with surprise and pushed aside the umbrella.

"Not Bennett, the illustrator?" I exclaimed.

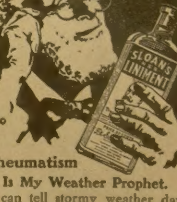
"Why not, please?"

"Well!" I gasped, quite overcome, for I knew and loved his illustrations in the leading magazines, and had read everything about him I could lay my hands upon. "And to think we first thought you insane, and I even doubted your honesty, while all the time you were——"

"A very spoiled, lazy fellow," he interrupted gravely, "and a lonely fellow, too, for success like mine brings many acquaintances and few friends."

"You can always have Mr. Blake," I suggested pointedly, as he paused.

"Blake is all very well in his place," he returned, shifting the umbrella to his left hand and feeling abstractedly in



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KILLS PAIN

his pocket, "but I want something lots better, and I think I've found my heart's desire. I want you to see her picture."

"So you are going to be married?"

I scarcely recognized my own voice, it sounded so strained and mechanical.

"I truly hope so, but I have not ventured to ask her yet. Will you look at the picture and tell me whether you think she will be kind? You see, I'm by no means certain, and it is very vital to me."

"How can I tell?" I began petulantly, then paused abruptly, for it was our picture he laid upon my lap, the one he had so shamelessly abstracted from Gabrielle's shopping bag. So I stared wide-eyed and speechless, with a clutching at my heart I could not understand. Was it Gabrielle or Elizabeth?

"The one in the middle," he said gently. "Elise—will she be kind?"

And then I realized he was not speaking of some remote, shadowy paragon of a girl, but of me—just as I was, in my old rain-coat and dripping hat. I realized something else, too, for when I looked up and met his eyes, I tried to speak, but could not, because my heart was too full. But words were quite unnecessary, for we were looking into each other's eyes, and of course we understood.

"And now," he remarked, some time later, when we were brought back to earth, or rather to water, by the fine soft drizzle changing into a brisk shower—"and now you really must go in, or you will have pneumonia, and then what should I do? But first it's up to me to return that side-comb. I said I'd do it in my own way, you know, so I'm going to put it in myself."

"But not now. Think how wet and horrid my hair must be."

And then—well, I don't believe it is necessary for me to say any more. Things which are very sweet and natural, and often form cherished memories, are apt to look very different in cold hard print, and, moreover, what would become of the little shrine we erected for ourselves that rainy afternoon if I took the world into our confidence and allowed it to be desecrated by the critical outsider?

## CHAPTER XVIII.

MARY ANNE made us our farewell fire that night, almost putting it out with the tears she shed as she arranged the driftwood. For Mary Anne was a veritable Niobe these last days, poor soul, and every spare moment was given over to weeping. She was, she told us as she struck the match, going home to England, where she hoped she might die happy some day, if only she could learn to forget. She could live on her savings, and if not, work was always to be had when one looked for it. And she hung lovingly about us, too, with protestations of affection and regret at all that had happened.

"I looked out fur you," she said; "I done what I could, fur I come to love you all, and 'ow could I 'elp it? I made 'em give back your ring, Miss Elizabeth, which she took offen your finger before your very h'eyes, miss, when you was 'olding of 'er 'and on the rocks in the moonlight. Oh, she was clever, she was. But I made 'er give it up. I went out that night, but she was away wi' 'Arry Graham and I couldn't git it till next day. Which it was my shadder and Willy's you seen that night, Miss Elise. He, 'alf crazy, pore lad, because jest as soon as you was out of sight she up and jined 'Arry Graham and went out on the water wi' 'im. And them red roses, Miss Gabrielle—you seen 'ow it was. And she alwiz 'ad 'em, alwiz. 'Arry Graham seen to that, and Willy couldn't do nothing."

Here she paused for breath.

"And I never, never drugged you but the once," she continued—"in the chocolate, you know. I wouldn't do it for neither of 'em, and very 'ard they thought of me for it, too; but ow' could I go for to do it and you trustin' me, even when you 'eard me and Willy talkin' in the cellar? And I brought you the tea myself that last night, Miss Elise, when she wanted to give it to you 'erself and put a powder in it to send you to sleep; but I wouldn't let 'er, for all she was my son's wife. Oh, Willy, Willy!"

We got rid of her after a while, and settled down for our last evening, while the fire burned with its green, blue, lavender, and red lights, wherein I now found wonderful pictures and not so very remote either, and the ocean rolled monotonously outside.

In the first long silence I told the girls about it—glad that the lamp was not lighted, and glad also that the firelight did not shine upon my face. Well, they were very, very nice, and considerate enough to ask but few searching questions—altho they have since told me they were consumed with the desire to do so.

So the evening passed, and at last we went unwillingly upstairs, careful not to mention that it was our last night in the little cottage, which, in spite of everything, we still loved.

I lay broad awake for a long time, listening to the washing of the waves and thinking the thoughts that come to a girl but once in a lifetime, when I heard a low voice from the next room, and knew the others were wakeful also.

"Were you surprised, Elizabeth?"

"Yes, I certainly was"—the emphasis in Elizabeth's tone left no room for doubt. "Somehow, I never associated Elise with marriage—or men either, for that matter."

"Neither did I. She'll never be the same again, but oh, Elizabeth, if it had been you, what should I have done?"

"And I was just lying here thinking how dreadful it would have been if it had happened to you. So long as we have each other, nothing else matters."

"No, nothing else matters. I hope she'll be very happy, but Elise is—well, she's Elise, and I can't help wondering how she is going to like married life."

And I wonder, too, for, after all, it is always like starting a very small ship across a very broad ocean. But I am not afraid of the voyage, for Gordon is going with me, and we have engaged a pilot whose name is spelled with four letters; he is warranted to steer a safe course thru every sort of weather, and we both believe he will bring us safe into port at last.

The End.

* * *

# The Coral Emblem.

(Continued From Page 5.)

at once, please; I must have a moment to finish my toilet."

Despite her defiance, she seemed on the verge of tears. Already very uncomfortable, I placed my hand on the door-knob.

Conroy took a step toward the wonderfully beautiful woman who stood within the dressing-room.

"Signorina—your highness—whatever name you choose to go by—perhaps this is an intrusion—I don't know. All I do know is that for months I have waited and hunted for an opportunity of talking with you. I can't give up. If I leave now, will you see me after the final curtain?"

She hesitated. Suddenly his eyes grew bold.

"I'll propose a bargain," he exclaimed. "If you'll do this—give me the one evening out of your life—I'll promise to forget the Queen, the seven dances of the Sacred Seal, the pink whiskers of Nagarusalem, and everything I know, or think I know, about the affair. What do you say?"

"That I will miss my cue, if you don't leave at once."

He hesitated, then she added in a voice that was unexpectedly soft and human:

"After the final curtain, then—this one evening—no more, remember."

We hurried down the corridor toward the bustling groups of people, the maze of props and drops and kindred appliances that cluttered the back of the stage. I had not heart to comment on my companion's exultant countenance. After all, it seemed to me that we had accomplished very little.

"I can't help it, old man!" he exclaimed. "I'm crazy over her—there's no use denying it. I have been ever since the other affair. She promised me one evening. It will be my fault, if I don't make it a lifetime."

And now, from all directions, the members of the company were hurrying to their places for the third act.

"Wait until she goes by," whispered Conroy.

A moment later she came running forward, clad in a wonderful Egyptian costume. I heard my companion's sharp intake of breath; then there was an explosion, a vivid flash, the shrill cry of "Fire!" rang out, and—chaos.

I was flung violently to one side by a panic-stricken scene shifter. The screams of women were mingled with the oaths of men and the clatter of footsteps. Above all the panic and confusion, I recollect the great bulk of the Englishman, racing past me with his overcoat streaming ludicrously behind and his sandy mustache working convulsively, while he cried over and over:

"Save the women! Save the women!"

Suddenly he snatched up one of the bewildered figures cowering in a group near the back drop. He swung her to his shoulder as if she had been a child, and dashed toward the stage entrance, still shouting hoarsely:

"Save the women! Save the women!"

I was borne irresistibly forward in the jam. But the Englishman and his machine were nowhere in sight, when I finally floundered into the alleyway in the midst of a scrambling mob of breathless, wild-eyed actor folk and scene shifters.

This strange story will be continued in the next issue of the Ledger. During the coming months many great stories will appear in these columns. If you are not already a subscriber for this paper, it will repay you to send in a year's subscription. It costs you only $1 00, and you will never regret it. Let us hear from you at once.

* * *

### INTO THE DAY.

Into the day I must put my soul,
  All my dreams of a future fine;
Not as a part, but of life, the whole
  Must I look at this day of mine.

I must be all that I hope to be,
  From dawn to dusk as I go my way;
No tomorrow may come to me,
  I must live out my life today.

Greatness of soul isn't future bliss,
  Nor won as laurel to wreathe the brow;
Much of beauty the life shall miss
  That isn't "splendid with honor now."

* * *

# WORK OF ART.

Mrs. Whitney raised her eyes from her embroidery and glanced out of the window. Then she leaned forward, letting her work drop to her knees, and fixed her gaze on some object in the street. A moment later she fell back limp in her chair.

"I knew it! I felt it coming!" she moaned. "Oh, Henry, Henry!"

Her Cousin Katherine rushed across the room and peered anxiously out of the window, expecting to see nothing less tragical than the lifeless form of the head of the household being borne home on a stretcher. Instead, she saw that person walking briskly down the street, apparently in all his pristine vigor and bearing a package of huge proportions. This package he placed carefully on the step while he fumbled for his latchkey.

"Dear me, Helen, what a start you gave me!" complained Cousin Katherine. "What in the world is the matter?"

Mrs. Whitney sat up very straight and spoke grimly in measured accents. "Henry Whitney has been to another auction sale."

Cousin Katherine looked somewhat nettled. "Well, really, Helen," she said, "I don't see why it should excite you so. It seems a harmless amusement."

"Harmless!" Mrs. Whitney spoke with bitter emphasis. "Why, Cousin Katherine, I haven't had a peaceful moment since Henry got this auction craze. I never know what he is going to bring home. That atrocious clock in the library and those two unspeakable vases in Henry's den are some of the fruits of his mania for auctions."

"Oh, I supposed they were wedding presents," put in Cousin Katherine.

"I think he has brought home a second-hand tombstone this time, judging from the size of it," declared Mrs. Whitney. "The auction people simply get hold of him and sell him everything that nobody else will have."

"Couldn't you persuade him——"

"Oh, I gave up trying to reason with him long ago. Sh-h-h! Here he is."

Whitney entered with the ineffable smile of one who says to himself: "I have a precious secret to divulge—all in my own good time." He crossed the room with a perfunctory greeting to his wife and her guest and deposited his burden affectionately in the corner on a couch. Then he produced a penknife from his pocket and proceeded to cut the strings which bound its paper wrappings.

Layer after layer he removed amid a tense silence. The last paper came off with a flourish, revealing in all its hideousness an imitation bronze figure of a youth clothed in barbaric garments which may have atoned for their scantiness by a superabundance of gilding.

Whitney gazed upon this work of art with rapt admiration. Then he turned to the two women as if to invite their praise.

If at this instant a maid had not announced dinner there might have been a painful domestic scene, for Mrs. Whitney's powers of self-repression were strained to the breaking point.

Moved by a single impulse, hostess and guest hastened to the dining-room, leaving the host to follow after one more rapturous glance at his new treasure.

At twelve o'clock that night the house was dark and still when two misty shapes invaded the living-room and made their way to the couch in the corner. There was a heavy thud and then the shapes vanished.

"Why, how in the world could it have happened?" exclaimed Mrs. Whitney and Cousin Katherine in concert when the next morning loud outcries from Whitney brought them to the living-room, where he had gone to take a look at his new acquisition before starting downtown. Now he stood, pointing tragically.

Upon the floor, with its head severed from its body, lay the figure in its attire of bronze paint.

"It is absolutely inexplicable—absolutely," said Whitney, disconsolately, stooping to pick up the paint-bedecked head.

It was not until the man of the house had departed that the two conspirators dared to look at each other. Then they broke into peals of laughter.

"My conscience didn't hurt me, even when I saw poor Henry's face," said the undutiful wife, between outbursts of merriment.

"Conscience! Well, I should say not!" exclaimed Cousin Katherine. "It was one of the most deserving acts that I ever performed. Now, you'd better have somebody take these pieces out and dispose of them, or he'll bring home some kind of patent glue and put that statue together again."

* * *

### Too Complimentary.

The Lady of the House—"Mary, it seems to me that the crankiest mistress gets the best cooks."

The Genius of the Kitchen—"Ah, gwan now, mum, with your flattery!"—Puck.

## Valued Home Remedies

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Globe Pine Comp'd Aromatic....½ ounce
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The sugar syrup is made by dissolving six heaping tablespoonfuls of granulated sugar in ¾ cup of water. Be sure to use Globe Pine Compound which is sold only in ½-oz. screw top cases with Aromatic printed in red on outside.

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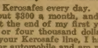

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# Out of the Storm

### By Arthur W. Peach

DON HALSTEAD, ranger in the Northern Forestry Division of the State, stood at his window and stared across the mountain range. The sky was black with storm, and the blackness over the great peaks was being slit continually by streams of lightning.

"This storm is going to be a humdinger!" he muttered.

Hardly had he spoken the words before the storm broke on his spur of the range. Darkness swept over the land, and the rattling, roaring crash of the thunder reverberated among the giant hills.

He seated himself by his bunk, and lit his pipe. As he did so, he heard a scratching at his door. Putting his weight against it to keep it from being blown back, he opened it; and to his utter astonishment, a girl, in garments soaking wet, her hair snarled about her face, staggered in, and sank with a moan to the floor.

For one moment that seemed an hour Halstead stared at her. He recognized her as the pretty daughter of the old Scotch shepherd, MacPherson, in the valley, who had made so much trouble for the Government. What could she be doing way up there in the mountains?

He did not stop to answer his own question. Gathering her slender body in his arms, he laid her on his bunk, warmed a stimulant and gave it to her.

As consciousness came, she seized his arm with a cry of terror. He was touched by the fright in her eyes.

"You're safe, little girl, don't be scared. I'm Don Halstead, and you're as safe here as you would be in your own home," he said soothingly.

For a moment the fright vanished, but at his mention of "home" she shivered.

The storm was clearing above the mountain, and he went outside to uncover his woodpile and bring in a few sticks. As he stepped thru the door on his return with his arms full of wood, he met his next shock.

He was looking into the muzzle of his own rifle, held in the girl's steady hands; over it her eye gleamed.

"You come in! Leave the door open!" she commanded.

He obeyed silently; he thought she was insane, and it was the part of wisdom to obey, for the rifle she held in her hand at her shoulder was fitted with a hair-trigger, and the slightest pressure would end his working days forever.

Following her commands, but waiting for an opportunity to seize her, he went to the end of the cabin as she retired thru the door. She stopped.

"You stay here. If you step out I'll shoot," she said hoarsely.

"Wait! Where are you going?" he demanded.

It was a wild and rocky country northward; death would come quickly to her if she ventured there.

She made no reply, but backed out of the door, holding the rifle steady. She shut the door, and as he sprang across to it, the bolt slid. As he struck the door too late to hold it open, a bullet crashed thru it.

He backed off. "She means business. I'll have to play a waiting game."

He would trail her after she had reached the woods beyond the clearing. He kicked off his heavy boots and slipped on a pair of tough-soled moccasins. Going to the back window, he forced out the frame, climbed thru, and peeked around the corner. She was standing in the edge of the woods looking back. He watched her go thru the lighter timber, and then disappear among the scrubs that covered the top of the ridge.

"By Jove! This is the queerest scrape I ever got into," he muttered. "She must be crazy. Perhaps she's just waiting to pick me off when I show up. I'll wait; I'm not anxious to be killed by a girl.'"

He waited for an hour, then started back toward the woods in the rear of his cabin. His flesh crept as he went, for he expected each moment to feel the blow of the bullet that would blast out his life or stretch him wounded. But no shot came, and he dived into the woods with a long breath of relief.

From there, he began to stalk with care and skill the place where he had last seen her. When he reached the spot, he found no sign of her other than the pressure of her small feet in the dead grass and leaves.

He started on, and rounding a stunted spruce, almost fell over her. She was stretched out like one asleep.

He bent over her. "Clean gone, like a person asleep."

Gathering her in his arms, he went back to the cabin, and carefully stowing away every instrument which he thought she could use as she had used the rifle, he set to work to revive her.

The color came slowly into her face, and her small mouth parted in a quick sigh. She opened her eyes and looked into his face.

"What——" she started to say, then she shivered. "Why did you bring me back? They'll hang me!"

"No one will touch you while you are with me," he answered, quietly.

Her gray eyes searched his. "Promise me!"

"I promise," he answered simply.

That day he watched over her; and tho she was under a strain of some terrific kind, he saw that she was not in the frantic state in which she had been.

That night he slept in his shed, where he rigged up a fair bunk. In the morning, as he stepped in the door, he found her busy over his camp stove. Her thick dark hair had been tightly bound, and she seemed more like a normal girl. She smiled faintly as she greeted him.

"I'm going to do something to pay for my board," she said.

"Just being a visitor is enough," he answered.

Tho he was deeply puzzled as to her actions the day before, and wondered what could be the cause of her terror, he said nothing about the matter. As they breakfasted, he could see that she was waiting and listening as if expecting some one to come; but as the day went on her attitude of fearful waiting seemed to pass. The strain she was under, however, did not lessen that he could see; and, finally, as they were sitting in front of the cabin, he asked her what was wrong.

The moment he made the request he was sorry, for her girlish chat immediately ceased and she became again the fearful woman.

She looked at him. "I'll tell you: I've killed a man," she said.

Halstead jumped in spite of himself, and he was so jarred that he could think of nothing to say.

She went on. "I shot him, and I meant to. I came this way because I thought I could get over into the other State. Then that awful storm came up—and I don't remember much more."

What she said worried him. Her very coolness showed that she had really shot a man. She would give no further information; and Halstead realized that it would not be long before a runner would come to his cabin with the usual information that he was to watch out for her on the chance that she might take the trail which ran thru his region.

And here she was. She was nothing more than a girl, but the rough life she had led with her father had given her a wisdom and a courage far beyond her years.

Halstead tried to figure what to do. He had promised that no harm could come to her, and she was relying upon his promise. Finally, he decided to make her promise to stay near the shack. Some way the thought of her leaving began to mean much to him. Then he would watch for the runner from the valley and head him off. So he went to the crest of the spur and watched.

Just about noon he caught sight of the man for whom he was watching. Halstead headed him off. The man's errand was as he had expected.

"Sure thing," the runner explained. "Ferris went up to old MacPherson's

# Get Into Business For Yourself —

Do you know that you can make $100 to $300 a month or more running a traveling store on wheels—handling a high class line of standard merchandise—do you know you can establish yourself in a mighty fine, solid business of your own without any previous experience and with little or no capital? You can do it—you can start right away and make more money at it than at anything you ever attempted under the new Wilbur Plan.

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The Wilbur Company, one of the largest manufacturers of their kind in the world, will start you out in a business of this kind and guarantee you that if you follow their directions **you'll easily make over $100 a month, clear, right from the start.** They will set you up in a business of your own, **furnish you all goods—on credit—give you an exclusive territory, teach you the business** from the ground up and make everything so easy and simple that **you can't help but succeed.** They'll not only give you a complete course of instruction but **actually help you out with advertising of all kinds, special premium deals,** extra cash commissions, etc.—all **ABSOLUTELY FREE.** All they require is that you furnish some sort of equipment to carry the goods in—automobile, wagon or rig of some kind—sign a contract for your territory and have two other men vouch for your honesty and reliability. The Company is making these Wilbur men the **finest Corps of Retailers in the country,** giving them extra large profits with pleasant, healthy, agreeable work—**the chance of a lifetime for any ambitious man, anywhere.**

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The Company furnishes you all your goods at low, wholesale prices and on credit—**no money in advance.** You sell the goods at retail prices **making a big margin of profit** on each sale and paying the Company for the goods **as you collect the money from your customers.** There are over one hundred different articles in the Wilbur Line—all of them household and farm necessities. You can call on ten to twenty or more customers a day and sell $2.00 to $10.00 at each place, so you can see what your sales will amount to. It all depends on how hard you work. Besides this the Company gives you liberal commissions on any other business that comes in from your territory by mail. That adds sometimes several hundreds of dollars a year to your other profits and gives you **a good solid business** all around that should net you **at least $200 a month.**

This is not guess work. Other men have done it. F. C. Jackson, Texas, sold $4,800 in ten months; Albert H. Carr, Missouri, has made over $10,000 in three years; Geo. Ebhardt, Georgia, has averaged $200 a month for over four years. We have hundreds of these men earning $2,000 to $3,000 a year at this business, and they started out without capital or previous experience of any kind. That's why we say that **with the same amount of work and energy there's more money to be made under the Wilbur Plan in less time than in any other** similar business a man can enter.

## Wilbur Goods Sell Quick

The big Wilbur Line is **well advertised, well known and as fast a selling line of goods as there is on the market.** There are Stock Tonics, Veterinary Remedies, Reliable Family Medicines, Soaps, Toilet Articles, Flavoring Extracts, Spices, Household Articles, etc.—each and every article the finest of its kind and **absolutely guaranteed.** It's a line of goods you'll be proud of—**you'll be mighty proud to handle**—you can look a man right in the eye and tell him honestly that there aren't any better goods made. You give bigger better values than anyone can buy in a store. **You guarantee every article to give satisfaction—if they don't please your customers in every way—back goes their money!** That's why Wilbur goods sell so easy.

THE WILBUR CO.
Wilbur's
FARM
REMEDIES
FAMILY MEDICINES
SPICES
EXTRACTS
TOILET
GOODS

Besides this you have special deals to offer them—premiums and combination offers from time to time that make your sales come quick and fast. Sample outfits are arranged, advertising matter furnished and everything is made so simple and easy that anyone who is willing to get out and show the goods **can be a success right from the start.**

You will of course need some means of traveling around and carrying the goods. For this a light automobile (such as a Ford or Maxwell) is best, provided the roads are such that you can travel over them with an automobile at least ten months of the year. Otherwise a medium weight road team and a canvassing wagon is best. The Company can furnish specially constructed delivery bodies for automobiles as well as canvassing wagons and will sell them to their men at factory cost and on easy terms if desired. A second-hand automobile or a single horse and light rig will do for the start and until a regular equipment can be provided. The better the canvassing equipment, however, the better the business will be. Full information about your equipment and advice as to what is best to get will be sent you as soon as you send in your application.

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**You don't have to go through with a lot of red tape to get started.** It's all made simple and easy for you. All you do is to make up your mind you want a Wilbur Position and can comply with the simple requirements. Then fill out the Application Blank below and mail it to the Wilbur Company telling what territory you prefer.

Just as soon as they get your application they will send you a contract for your territory. This contract must be signed by you and by two other responsible men who are willing to vouch for your honesty. They also send you all further details about the proposition and suggestions as to how to get your automobile or wagon. Then as soon as you return the Contract to them all signed up they will start you out with what goods you need—**on credit—not a cent in advance**—together with full set of instructions, advertising matter, etc.

Right now **all you do is to fill out the Application Blank.** This puts you under no obligation whatever. But it'll give you the start in a business that **will pay you $2,000 to $4,000 a year—easy.** Your opportunity is right here. **Territory is going fast.** Your application will hold yours for you. **Just fill it out and mail it at once.**

**WILBUR STOCK FOOD CO.,** 170 Huron St., Milwaukee, Wis.

## APPLICATION BLANK

Wilbur Stock Food Company,
170 Huron St., Milwaukee, Wis.

I want to apply for one of the Wilbur Salesmanships. Please send me your contract and if it is satisfactory I will have it signed and returned. This application places me under no obligation whatever.

Name……

Address…… RR. No.……

I prefer territory in the following counties:

1st choice—County……

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How are the roads in your choice of territory?……

How many months can you travel by auto?……

Can you procure an auto (new or second-hand)?……

Can you procure a team?……

Are you interested in a Delivery Body?……a Canvassing Wagon?……

REFERENCES.

Age?…… Married?…… Last Occupation……

……

Have you ever canvassed?…… Line……

Name of Company?……

Can you give references if required?……

shack to arrest him, and ran plumb on the girl. She got wise to what he was after, and let him have a bullet in the body; then she lit out. Old Mac wasn't there, but they cornered him down the slope with his sheep, and landed him after a tussle."

"Kill Ferris?"

"No, she meant to all right; he bled a lot. But the gang that landed old Mac came to the shack and found Ferris."

"Well, I'll keep an eye out for her. So long."

Halstead watched the runner out of sight, then he returned to his cabin. What was there for him to do except to give the girl over? he asked himself; then something seemed to tighten within him. He would not give her up, for he wanted her—for himself!

He stopped in his tracks, breathless with the thought. She was a woods girl. What a mate she would make for him!

He found her busying herself with the dinner. He said nothing about what he had learned until the meal was closed. Then he told her.

"I didn't kill him? My! but I'm glad! Yet—yet he deserved to be!" Her gray eyes were bright with anger.

"Tell me the whole story!" he begged.

She looked at him again with a bit of tenderness in the glance. "You have been true-blue with me. I will tell you."

It was a clear explanation. Ferris had come to the shack, had found her father absent, and thinking to take advantage of that absence, had approached her. She had warned him twice; then, the third time, as he still came on, her Scotch courage had risen in wrath, and she had shot him.

Halstead paced the shack as he listened to the story she told with bitterness, her cheeks flaming.

When she was thru he turned to her. "You are a true daughter of your father. I have long believed in him, and that he was right in his fracas with the Government. Now I must tell you that he has been caught, and it won't be long before he will be on trial."

"Father in jail!" It was a cry more than human words.

"Yes, and now listen, little girl. I'll take a hand in this game. I want to take you down to the valley. I've got money banked there. I'll put you and your dad on bail, and I'll get old Judge Seever, the best in this part of the State, to defend you. I'll pull you both from the fire. I know it can be done; I know what Ferris is—in fact, enough to shut him up!" he added hotly.

She was listening with shining eyes.

"But what are you doing this for me for?" she asked.

He stared at her for a moment, for he knew he had come face to face with a question he must answer.

*"I'll tell you, Rose," he answered quietly. "When it's all straightened out, I have a plan. Your dad is too old for his work; I'm going to ask him to come up here and—and I'm going to ask you to come up, too. I wasn't planning to ask you just now, but I've been learning things since that day you came. Of course, if you don't want to come, you needn't; but if you want to——"*

She drew her lithe young body tight to his with her arms where a girl's arms usually fit. "Don't you worry about my coming," she said softly. "Here's my promise." She kissed him and added. "Now, I'll get ready to be taken to jail by my lover!"

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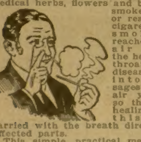

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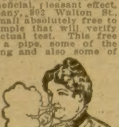

* * *

### SEX PROBLEM.

Now father's taking Dick with him
To have his hair cut; see
How mother's eyes with tears are dim
"Bring back his curls to me!"

She holds him close, her heart is sore,
Grief has obscured her joy.
"You aren't my baby any more,
You're mother's great, big boy."

She watches him go down the street
In mingled woe and pride;
He tries in vain to make his feet
Keep step with father's stride.

They reached the shop—the barber pins
An apron on him, then,
"Nice little girl!" he says and grins
And winks at all the men.

Dick's face grows red. "I ain't no girl!"
"What's that? I can't be wrong;
Boys never wear their hair in curl
And yours is extra long."

The ancient jest has failed to please,
Wrath smolders in his glance;
He pulls the apron from his knees—
"Look here! Girls don't wear pants!"

The curls are sheared, he goes his way,
Life can no longer vex;
The years may bring what woes they may—
They can't confuse his sex!

* * *

## MANAGING WILLIE.

"I was over at Mrs. Kershaw's the other day," said the woman with the little boy who was calling on her next door neighbor, "and I must say that she has changed of late years! Why, when I knew her as a girl she had such ability and was such a manager—and you ought to see the way that house is run and the perfectly dreadful way she has with her children!

"I don't believe in the old-fashioned way of frightening children to pieces and making them obey you because they are afraid. I never have the least trouble with my Willie, because I treat him like a human being. Darling, don't handle the fern, for Mrs. Janes may not like it. Everybody isn't like mother, who understands how interested little boys are in nature. Stop bending the leaf, dearest—oh, now, see! You've broken the whole stalk off! There, Willie, you see what happens when you don't obey mother!

"It's perfectly wonderful, Mrs. Janes, the reasoning power displayed by that child! You wouldn't think it, but he understands cause and effect perfectly. He bent the leaf—and it broke—an act and a result, you see. Willie, why did you break all those other leaves, too? Oh, so the plant would be even all around! Now, did you ever hear anything cleverer than that, Mrs. Janes? Willie has such an eye for form. I am sure he is going to be something wonderful, aren't you? I always believe in encouraging a child when he shows any signs of developing a particular faculty.

"There! Willie is investigating your cuckoo clock now. He has a perfect passion for finding out the reason for things. Willie, darling, you mustn't swing on the weights of the clock, you really mustn't.

"There! What did mother tell you? You swung on the weights and now you've pulled the whole clock down off the wall! You are likely to give people headaches when you make a big noise like that. Every one hasn't the perfect control of her nerves that mother has.

"There's everything in control, don't you think so, Mrs. Janes? I never allow any external fact to upset me. Oh, is the clock broken? Well, I don't believe it is a very bad break and a clever clock man can easily—oh, you say you brought it from Switzerland and it has a complicated foreign mechanism? Well, it does seem to me that Americans ought to be able to find enough goods manufactured in this country without encouraging anarchists and paupers abroad. I've often heard my husband talk about political affairs, so I suppose I am better informed than most women.

"The way Mrs. Kershaw lets her children run over her is perfectly dreadful. She didn't seem to have the least control of them at all. I——

"Willie, you mustn't scratch the piano with that pin. Mother means what she says, darling, and I expect you to obey. Not another scratch after that one you are making! I've no doubt if your furniture polish is the right kind, Mrs. Janes, it will rub the scratches out perfectly and, anyhow, they are such delicate ones. Willie has such a dainty touch with everything that sometimes I think he is going to be an artist.

"Why, Wil—l-i-e-e-e! Didn't you hear me say not another scratch? And you've made at least six more! Now, I simply will not be disobeyed that way and you may go sit in the green velvet chair. Climb back and sit there! You see, Mrs. Janes, I always punish promptly when Willie doesn't mind me. I simply will not tolerate disobedience the way Mrs. Kershaw does.

"If you had children yourself, you'd understand how it warms a mother's heart to feel the little things depending on one and taking one's word as gospel law. Why, Willie would no sooner think of going contrary to my wishes than he would think of flying, would you, dear?

"My goodness, where is Willie? He isn't in the green velvet chair. You haven't a cellar door or anything open, have you, Mrs. Janes, that he might fall down? I can't understand—oh, you say he is on the other side of the piano scratching it with another pin?

"Willie, come here—at once! Don't you know you grieve mother terribly when she finds that she can't trust you? Oh, you say you wanted to see if a black pin would make the same kind of a scratch as a white one! Did you ever—that investigating mind again! It makes me feel terribly responsible, Mrs. Janes, to think that it rests with me whether that shall all be mistakenly crushed out or encouraged. I am determined to bring out the best there is in Willie, at any cost. That is the reason I keep him with me so much in order that his character may develop properly.

"I've enjoyed this little visit with you—it rests one to get a change from one's usual thoughts, you know. Come over soon—it will brighten you up and interest you to be where there is a child about, and Willie is such a lovable little fellow.

"Kiss Mrs. Janes, darling. Why, what are you sticking out your tongue for? You say because you hate her? Oh, Willie, it is wrong to hate any one! Hasn't he a cunning, pink little tongue, Mrs. Janes?

"Some day when I'm going out I'll let you take him and keep him for a whole afternoon!"

* * *

## HE WENT CALLING.

The very little boy slid into the room and onto the edge of a chair carefully. Breathlessly he watched the contortions of his older brother, aged 17, who was engaged in adjusting a necktie.

"'Lo, kid," said the elder, abstractedly.

"Hello!" said the very little boy, settling back, delighted that he apparently was to be allowed to stay. "You—you're going out, aren't you, Ned?"

"Uh-huh," agreed the other, twisting at his refractory tie.

"You—you're going to call on a girl, aren't you?" breathlessly ventured the small boy. "Gee! It's great to be big enough to go calling! Why—why did they laugh at you at dinner?"

The elder scowled. "Aw, they're just nuts!" he said fiercely. "They think they're funny, that's all!"

"Do you think they're funny?" inquired the small boy, with interest. His brother whirled on him, but calmed before the innocent gaze that met him. He laughed negligently as he picked up the hairbrush.

"I don't pay any attention to them," he said scornfully. "Why should I? A—a man has to overlook foolish people and foolish things!"

"Is dad foolish?" asked the small boy, surprisedly. "He laughed when Bert was teasing——"

"The idea!" said the elder, hotly. "Bert teasing me! As tho he could say anything that amounted to anything! Why, I don't have any more use for Bert's opinions than—than that!"

The small boy blinked at the snap of the fingers. "You're awful brave, aren't you, Neddie?" he asked admiringly. "I don't suppose you'd be afraid of—of a lion, now, would you?"

"No," said the elder, in gratified tones. "Not me! Bring on your lion!"

"Then why," persisted the small boy, "did Bert say he bet your knees would knock together when you asked for Alice? Is Alice worse than a lion? Is——"

"See here!" broke in the other, with a scowl. "You've got to be respectful to older people! You must say Miss Bimson instead of being so fresh and using her first name!"

"All right," said the small boy hurriedly. "I didn't know Al—Miss Bimson was grown up! She swings in Tommy Bimson's swing sometimes. You didn't tell me whether dad was foolish, too."

"Don't be silly," said the elder, severely.

"All right," said the little boy, quickly. "It doesn't scare you to call on Al—Miss Bimson, does it, Neddie?"

"Suppose you cut out that 'Neddie!'" ordered the other. "It's time this family remembered my name is Edward. Of course it doesn't scare me! It's a perfectly simple thing to call on a girl and——"

"How do you do it?" asked the small boy, with interest. The other laughed condescendingly.

"My, you're just a kid, aren't you?" he commented. "Why, you walk up the steps and ring the bell and ask if Miss Bimson is in—and you go in. That's all!"

"Then what?"

The young man with the necktie stared at his own reflection. "Why," he said slowly, "you, you just talk! Gee! I wonder—girls are so queer. You can't always tell what they like to talk about, and a pause is fierce! Harold says there always comes an awful pause when you try to talk to a girl, and you want to jump thru the window."

"Are you going to jump thru the window?" excitedly asked the small boy. His brother recalled his presence with a jump. "No!" he said gruffly. "Certainly not! Don't be foolish! Calling on a girl is nothing to a grown man! It's perfectly simple!"

"I wish I was grown up," said the little boy, admiringly. "Why did you get so red when they laughed at you, Ned—Edward?"

The other coughed. "You just imagined it!" he said. "I wasn't paying any attention to them! Bert thinks he's so smart! He forgets I'm a man! I'll have to knock his head off some day, just to show him!"

"Really?" asked the small boy, awed.

"Sure," said his brother, fiercely. "I'll show him! I——"

"Haven't you gone yet?" inquired Bert, himself, sticking his head inside the door. "You'd better hurry, son! Little girls like Alice have to go to beddy-by-by early, you know!"

"Aw!" growled Edward, whirling on his heel so that his indignant back greeted the tormentor.

"Aren't getting cold feet?" came the falsely sympathetic inquiry.

"Aw, you!" choked the 17-year-older.

"Why," broke in breathlessly the very little boy from the chair edge, "why don't you knock his head off and show him, as you said you would, Ned—Edward?"

"Aw, you all make me good and tired!" shouted the 17-year-older as he bolted from the room furiously. "You all of you think you're so doggone smart!"

* * *

## In the Dead of Night.

Just as Doggie O'Nails, professional cracksman, was creeping out of No. 13 Hardluck terrace, the owner of the house grasped his shoulder.

"Don't shoot, I give up!" cried Doggie hoarsely.

"I only desire to put a question to you," said Oddsen Ends, the riddle fiend—for it was he. "What I want to know is this: If a thief is busily engaged plying his trade up in our attic, could he be truthfully said to be above doing wrong actions?"

Doggie O'Nails gazed at him with open mouth.

"In default of an answer to that," went on Oddsen Ends, "perhaps you won't mind telling me something not so directly connected with your trade. Why are ill-fed soldiers like brief speeches?"

"Lookit here, cull," began the cracksman dazedly.

"Because they are short o' rations. See, short."

But with one masterly shove O'Nails had pushed him down the artesian well and clambered over the garden wall.

"Well," chuckled Oddsen Ends, and dropped peacefully off to sleep.

* * *

### What He Did.

"What do you do when you go home late at night and find your wife waiting up for you?"

"Wish I hadn't gone home."

Stop Whiskey

Wonderful Treatment Helped Faithful Wife to Save Husband When All Else Failed.

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Golden Treatment Did It

Golden Treatment is Odorless and Tasteless—Any Lady Can Give It Secretly at Home in Tea, Coffee or Food.

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Wives, mothers, sisters, it is you that the man who drinks Whiskey, Wine or Beer to excess must depend upon to save him from a ruined life and a drunkard's grave. He can't stop—but you can save him. All you have to do is to send your name and address and we will send absolutely FREE in plain wrapper a trial package of GOLDEN TREATMENT. You will be thankful as long as you live that you did it. Address DR. J. W. HAINES CO., 7477 Glenn Bldg., Cincinnati, Ohio.

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# THE FAIRY CORNER

### POLLY AND THE FROG.

I think the frog most impolite
Of fishes on the land or sea—
If fish he be.
I saw one in the bog one night,
And on my word of honor he
Did wink at me,
And blink at me—
Which made me terribly confused,
For we had not been introduced.

◆

## PRINCE PONTO

Prince Ponto was the despair of his subjects. He was so fond of eating that there were not enough cooks in his kingdom to prepare the various and elaborate dishes he required. Never did he sit down to a banquet costing less than $25,000, and each one of these daily meals lasted four hours. How Prince Ponto was able to endure such splendid repasts nobody could tell; but perhaps the reason was this:

Altho he demanded every possible kind of meat placed upon his tables at one time—probably for the greater delectation of his guests—it was observed by his attendants and those most closely connected with him that he contented himself with one special dish and with only this kind for a number of days in succession. Finally he would tire of what had cost the ingenuity and skill of many famous chefs, and then his devoted subjects would be hard put to it to find a still more appetizing dainty.

It happened on a summer evening in the tenth year of his reign that Prince Ponto found himself entirely without desire for what was placed before him. Nightingales' tongues, fricassed with canary wings and served on the plumage of humming birds, held no delights. A creamy syrup of rose leaves and crushed pearls, sprinkled with diamond dust, was pushed aside with scarcely a glance.

"Alas, what to do?" his distressed people asked of each other. "How can we arouse Prince Ponto from his apathy and make him smile upon us again?"

Committees were formed to discuss the matter, and fortune tellers and wizards were called upon for aid in the great difficulty. Suggestions and advice came in plenty but proved to be worthless.

"What to do?" The question became the burning topic of conversation. As they pondered and their perplexity increased, a little maiden suddenly appeared among them.

"Let me help you," she said.

Loud laughter greeted her request, but some of the wise men stilled the tumult and bade her speak on.

"How, little maid, can you be of any assistance here?" they asked.

"Just let me go into one of the big kitchens," she said, "and I will show you."

Not knowing what else to do they agreed, and the child, followed by a crowd of worthies, made her way to where, in a great room, immense ovens were glowing with heat and the air was fragrant with odors of meat and pastry. Placing herself at one of the tables, she proceeded to issue orders to those about her, caring little whether her servitors were philosophers or even of the royal family itself.

Into a large dish she crumbled herbs of all kinds, then threw in spices and quantities of red and white pepper, with a dash of salted mustard. Enough sulphur was sifted in to form a dough, and this the little maiden placed in a fluted pan and set in the oven to bake. At the end of half an hour a heavy, almost suffocating aroma filled the nostrils of the waiting throng, and the cake was pronounced done.

It was eagerly taken from the oven, and every one bent forward for a look. Alas! what a disappointment to the courtiers! The cake resembled nothing in size, shape and color so much as a musk melon. The courtiers were dreadfully disappointed, but not so the little maiden. With cheeks aglow and eyes aflame she clapped her hands merrily.

"Ah!" she exclaimed, "it is perfect! The Prince can wish for nothing more delicious."

She carefully placed the cake on a golden platter and poured over it a quart of vinegar.

"Horrible!" gasped the courtiers.

"Perfect!" cried the little maid again. "Now lead me to the Prince."

"Nay," remonstrated the court chamberlain; "it were worth our lives to permit you to offer such a concoction to his highness."

The maiden's face clouded. "So be it," she said, "you will let your beloved Prince die of hunger when there is what will save him. At least you might try it, and I will take the blame."

[illegible] the chamberlain. "What say you, my lords?"

"The child is not without reason," said [illegible]. "At least let us try the effect of her cooking upon Prince Ponto."

"Then haste we to the royal presence," and forthwith the entire body of courtiers, headed by the little maiden bearing her cake proudly aloft, turned toward the royal apartments.

Sitting dejectedly upon his throne was the Prince. His half-closed eyes made no note of the dancing girls bending and pirouetting before him. Even the entrance of the courtiers had no power to break his stupor.

"We humbly crave the least of your life-giving glances," began the court chamberlain, prostrating himself.

"We want you to taste this cake," cried the little maiden, fearlessly. Consternation overspread the faces of the assemblage at this bold act, but the merry voice caught the attention of the Prince. He raised his head slowly and looked at the speaker. Clad in a frock of blue, her bronze curls shining in the sunlight and her two great eyes laughing at him over an oval cake, the little maiden broke down the barriers to his heart. He didn't wish the cake—indeed, the mere thought of food was distasteful—but he had a sudden and unquenchable desire to please the dainty newcomer.

"Cut me off a slice of the cake," he murmured.

"We forgot to bring a knife," said the child, "but I'll break you off a piece."

From her small fingers the Prince accepted the proffered portion, while the bewildered courtiers, outraged at such a breach of etiquette, stared dumfounded. The Prince examined the odd-looking morsel curiously and then took a mouthful. In an instant his face was puckered into a thousand wrinkles; he gasped and choked, and his eyes seemed popping from his head.

"He is dying!" wailed the courtiers

"He is no such thing," contradicted the child; "he is simply working up an appetite."

Scarcely had she uttered these words when the Prince stood upright; all the authority of his old manner returned.

"Hasten!" he commanded. "Fetch me food—anything, everything—I don't care what, as long as it makes me forget the taste of that"—he pointed to the cake.

The courtiers fell over one another in their efforts to reach the kitchen, and the little maiden smiled on them all. Meats of every description were heaped about the Prince, and he tasted of them all—tasted until even the little maiden wondered.

"My cake has given you an appetite, sire," she remarked.

The Prince bent forward and patted her on the head.

"It is only by eating other things that I can forgot the taste of it, little maiden," he said.

◆

## TOM, TOMMY, THOMAS

My first recollection of life is that of finding myself in a roomy basket with my little brother, who was just my age. We were two weeks old and we lived in that same place four months, playing together and being cared for by a kind young child who seemed to love animals.

One bright afternoon my mother took my brother Tom and me for a visit to one of the neighbors, and as we neared a shaggy-looking old house she said: "Now, Tom and Thomas, you young rascals must behave well and treat this new cat whom you are to meet with politeness."

"Yes, ma'am," we replied.

We were as good as our word. We liked Tommy, who was only four days younger than brother and I were, and we had many a good time with him after that. Some time later he came running over to our home and he was very much excited, for he had just caught a young mouse and he wanted to show his trophy. After that we proceeded to hunt mouse holes and to catch mice for our amusement.

A long, long time after this Tom got very sick. Mother sent me over to Tommy's to borrow some castor oil. I was just going to enter the door when something terrible happened. A great big mouse ran by. It must have been fully twenty times as large as the mice we had been catching. I was so startled that I shrieked right out. I had never tried to holler before, so it was a greater surprise to hear the noise than to see the mouse. However, I returned immediately with the medicine.

"Thomas," demanded my mother the instant I came into her presence, "what are you shaking about?"

"Oh! I have just seen the most terrible big mouse. It was almost as large as I, and I am awful scared of it."

This struck mother as a huge joke, and she just laughed to hurt herself. She told me that was what little boys got for catching mice

That was just enough to arouse my fighting blood and I was resolved upon doing something smart. On the next day, when Tom was better, I made arrangements with him and Tommy to steal out that night and practice singing.

When the time arrived we were all present and the practice came off wonderfully well. We found that we all had extraordinary voices. In fact, we were so delighted that we resolved to give a concert on the first night the moon was full. Tommy was to sing "Home, Sweet Home;" Tom, "Alexander's Ragtime Band," and I, "Good-by, Girls! Good-by."

At length the time arrived for our concert. We had only a few auditors, but enough for our first public [illegible] Tom began with his selection [illegible] ran up and down the scales a couple of times in order to assure himself that his voice was in the proper order. Then he sang the first verse and chorus. But when he got to the middle of the second verse he had forgotten his words. Well, he just sang on and made up the words as he went along. You could not understand what he said, anyhow. Every one shrieked out approval and this was more noise than the three of us had made at any time during our rehearsals.

Now it was Tommy's turn. He got up with all the pomp and splendor of a famous singer and sang his song very well; in fact, it was better than I could have done myself. Near the end a terrible tragedy occurred. Some one threw a lot of rocks and tin cans at our little concert troupe.

Didn't we take to our heels, tho? My! You ought to have seen us!

This fine entertainment having been interrupted so abruptly did not discourage us, however. We just planned to give another on the next Saturday night at eleven o'clock. At this concert we planned to sing "Tipperary," which was just out.

We selected a new theater, which was about a half block from the old one. This was a nice new board fence which was built just to keep the bulldog in the yard.

At this concert we had a most distinguished visitor, a big black bulldog, which barked continually thruout the whole performance.

You might think this would spoil our selections, but indeed it didn't. We imagined the dog was a drum and was beating time for us. This concert was grand and a great success. The party broke up about three o'clock. The crowd was well pleased and asked us to perform again on the following night. We gladly granted them the high honor of hearing us sing, but announced that an admission of one cent would be charged.

At this concert the bulldog was not as friendly as before. Some way or other he got out of the fence and ran after our auditors just as the show started

This concert having been broken up, we promised to give another at a new theater which was an old bench under the windows of a two-story rooming-house.

The night of the great event arrived at last, and we were singing our second selection when some one dropped a pair of old shoes out of the window. But this did not disturb us. We just kept on singing.

Presently a cross old man threw a whole pitcher of ice water on poor Tom, Tommy and me, and we all took pneumonia and died

◆

### NOT FOR SALE.

A little girl of 4 years went into a cafe for lunch with her two aunts. After taking the order for the two dinners, the waiter turned to the little girl and asked:

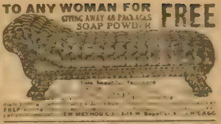
"What will you take for the little girl?"

The child looked up quickly, her face a mixture of fright and determination.

"They won't take nuffin' for me," she said, "I don't want to be sold."

◆

Perhaps the best way to kill falsehood is to let it lie.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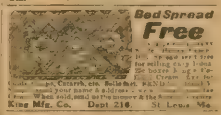
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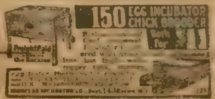
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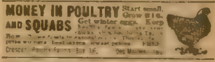
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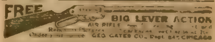
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"Constant complaint about bad electric service is like a popular drink."

"How so

"It's current whine"

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He lost a hundred dollars
  And now looks quite distraught
While thinking of the comforts
  That money might have bought

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### It Has One Advantage.

The Pessimist—"Just think how much more it costs to live than it did years ago."

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"I hear there's a famous soprano living in the flat next to you

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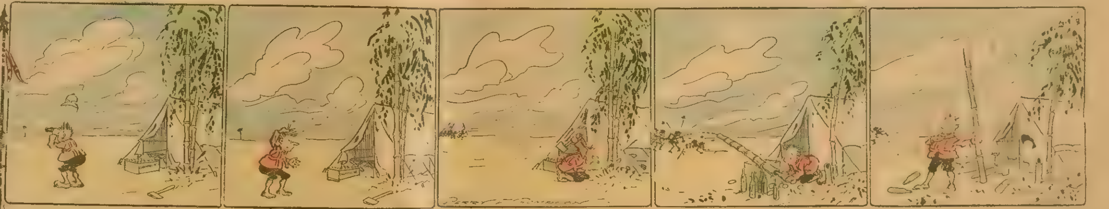


Explorer—"Thunder' There's a gang of cannibals coming, and Black Sam is off hunting with my only gun!

What the deuce can I do? Hah! There's that case of champagne! That gives me an idea!"

"I'll whack down this bamboo in a jiffy, trim off the branches and poke out the pith and—

"With some rocks for bullets, and two do[illegible] tles of champagne for explosive, I've got a cannon - [illegible] style [illegible] owardly savages to flight in grand [illegible] an is some bean, I tell you."

### Asking Too Much.

"When I hear efficiency engineers talking about wasted motions and misdirected energy" observed a Southern editor, "I often think there is more in fitting the man or woman to the job than most people realize One of our young matrons learned that fact this summer when she made a cake with her own fair hands to ornament the table at a luncheon she had planned

"It was to be a nut cake of pretentious build, and early in the morning she called to the kitchen Lindy Lee, a little colored girl who helped round the house, and gave her a bowl of nuts

"'Now, Lindy, I'm going to need a lot of nuts for this cake,' she said, 'and I want you to crack these for me You can go out there under the tree, where it's nice and cool.'

'Lindy delivered the shelled nuts in due course of time, but when her mistress started to put the finishing touches on her cake she found she was running short of material

[illegible] re, Lindy, there aren't enough [illegible] cover this cake [illegible] have to crack me some more right away '

"Oh Mis' Lucy, I can't crack no mo' o' them nuts" Lindy protested with her hand to her face 'My jaws is all sore now '

### Women Love to Gossip.

Clarke—'How is it you know so much about the neighbors' affairs as you tell at the club?'

Sparke—"Oh, my wife's maid picks it up from the other servants, and then my wife will insist on repeating it all to me You know how women will gossip!"

### Relief for the Autoist.

Lawyer—"Judge, I want you to fine this man who was knocked down by my client's car."

Judge—"Fine him? Why?"

Lawyer 'He had a nail in his clothes and it punctured a new tire."

### Hard Times Ahead.

The adored daughter was sad

"Father" she said "what has come over you? Since I can remember I never had a wish you were not anxious to gratify, and you even anticipated my wants and handed me money for all sorts of things that I hadn't even thought of. But now I have to ask you for every cent I need, and you growl and grunt and ask if I think you are made of money, and you invariably rail at woman's extravagance and invariably ask me what on earth I did with that last check, or dollar, or half-dollar, you gave me It is very strange Don't you love me any more, father?'

My dear Ethel," her father answered, "I love you as much as ever. But you are soon to be married, and I am trying gradually to prepare you for the change"

### Raised Both Hands.

A young Irish recruit neglected to sa- [illegible]

"Oh, I forgot sir'" said Paddy.

"Well, don't forget it the next time," said the officer as he walked on

Next day, as Paddy was hurrying along with two buckets of water, he again encountered his officer and, coolly laying down his burden, he raised both hands in salute

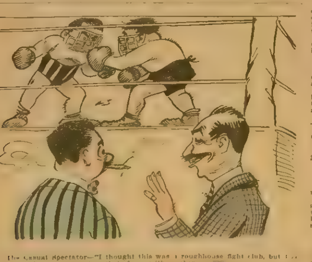
"What's this for?" asked the officer in surprise

"Sure, one of 'em is for yesterday, sir, was the cool reply.

### Getting Rid of Him.

The deacons and other officers of a church had met to discuss the best method of getting rid of a pastor who had worn out his usefulness After various methods had been suggested without any of them seeming feasible, one brother, who was a good deal of a wag, said'

"I tell you what to do. Let's pay him all of his salary in arrears an' raise him to a thousand a year an' he will drop dead



The Casual Spectator—"I thought this was a roughhouse fight club, but [illegible] you allow the pugs to protect their faces with [illegible]

The Old Timer [illegible] masks Them's muzzles It's against the rules to bite in the clinches."

### Proof Positive.

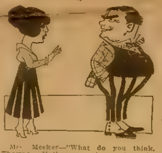
"I just know," simpered a young matron to a friend, as she gazed out upon the ballroom floor, "I just know that horrid Jones woman is in love with my husband. I know and I think she is the limit"

Nonsense, Mary," replied the friend "You are imagining things. Why, your husband has hardly spoken to her this evening, excepting as the conventionalities demanded. You're dreaming. Wake up'

No, I'm not I know what I'm talking about. She's simply head over heels in love with him"

"How do you know that?"

"Well, she has danced with my husband twice, and no woman can do that without being dead in love with him and willing to overlook a great deal. I can't dance with him more than once myself



Mrs Meeker—"What do you think, Thomas Mother says she wants to be cremated

Mr Meeker—"All right. Tell her to get her things on and I'll take her down now"

### His Method of Discovery.

A certain country school teacher, in endeavoring to explain to his class what compressed air was, brought his bicycle into the room and leaned it up against the wall

'Now,' he remarked, "under the outer covering of that back wheel there is a hidden force. What is it?"

Injy rubber," said one smart youth.

"No. Try again

The boy tried again, as did nearly every member of the class, but without success

At length one of the youngsters, who had been making a close inspection of the machine, turned on the teacher with a beaming face

"I have it,' he exclaimed "It's wind —jest wind

After commending the youngster the teacher asked how he discovered the hidden force"

"Why," was the astounding reply, 'I've just stuck my knife in it to see'

### Personal Loyalty.

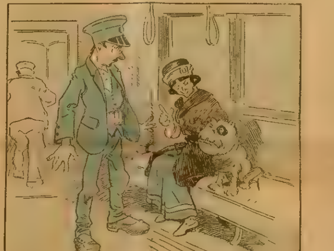
"You favor votes for women, do you not"'

Yes," replied Mr Meekton. "But I'm afraid that won't end the difficulty After women get the ballot, a lot of them are likely to get stubborn and not vote to suit Henrietta'

### A Willing Substitute.

Father (to his old friend's pretty daughter) 'Good by my dear' I won't kiss you, I have such a cold"

His Son (with alacrity)—"Can I do anything for you, father?"



Trolley Conductor—"You'll have to pay fare for th' dog, ma'am'"

Lady (with bulldog)—"He has it in his mouth all ready for you! Let the pice man take the nickel from your mouth, Duke

### ECONOMY.

Oh, I worry over this thing and I worry
  over that,
But I notice when the atmosphere has
  cleared
That the bad luck I had looked for didn't
  come and knock me flat,
And I didn't have the trouble that I
  feared.

Oh, I like to start the morning with an
  apprehensive sigh.
For I find a bit of worry to my taste.
But I cannot help a-thinking as the years
  go speeding by
That an awful lot of worry goes to
  waste

### Consistent Economy.

"People are undoubtedly making a proper effort to avoid wasting paper,' remarked Mr Chuggins

"How do you know?"

"I just bought one of those Flivvord autos and the man asked me if I wanted it wrapped up

### The Acceptable Time.

Jack—"Hang it! When I think of the foolish way I lost that twenty dollars today, it makes me furious. I feel as if I would like to have somebody kick me"

Ethel—"By the way, dear, don't you think you'd better speak to papa this evening?"

### Risky.

"So Mike Brown is dead! I understand his life was insured for $50,000 That will provide for his widow very nicely, provided she invests it wisely."

'Yes, but the indications are that she is thinking of investing it in another husband '

### On Guard.

Corporal— [illegible]

[illegible] me of some of the newfangled poetry they're printing in the magazines nowadays," observed the man who was viewing the parade of the "Punk- [illegible]

### A Little Dear.

Some time ago a charming girl came to town to spend a week with a young woman friend. While there she was induced to take part in a church bazaar, and was given charge of the confectionery stall. Eventually a middle-aged man was led that way

"They tell me I must buy some chocolates," smiled the victim, picking up a box from the stall. "How much is this?'

"Five dollars," answered the girl, without any visible evidence of conscientious pangs.

"Um," thoughtfully returned the victim, glancing from the chocolates to the girl, "aren't you a little dear?"

"Well," coyly rejoined the other, "that's what all the boys say."

### Drawing the Line.

"Why don't you take up aviation instead of motoring?"

"I can't see the advantage," replied Mr. Chuggins "An accident is bad enough as it is. I don't want a vehicle that'll put me in the hospital every time it goes to the repair shop"

### Extra Large Size.

"There goes Miss Grabcoin, the heiress. It is said that a duke once drank champagne out of her slipper"

Possibly so," answered the caustic young woman "Some of those foreign noblemen have an astounding capacity for wine"

### Sartorially Disappointing.

First Girl—"So you met Mr. Blank, the famous writer, at the reception. What do you think of him?"

Second Girl—"Not much. His clothes are quite old-fashioned, and I understood that he was celebrated for his style."

### Aren't Men Awful!

"Oh, George," said Mrs Bridge, "on your way downtown this morning will you stop at the grocer's and order two pounds of butter and a half-pound of tea and some crackers?"

"Yes, my dear

"And would you mind leaving my skirt at the tailor's as you go by?"

"Yes, my dear"

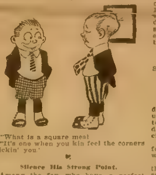
"And then go to the milkman's and tell him to leave an extra pint of cream tomorrow?"

"Yes, my dear"

"And when you get to your office will you call up my sister in Winchester and tell her I'll be over Tuesday? They don't charge you for calls there"

"Yes, my dear, and say, wifey, would you mind sewing up this little rip in my coat before I start?"

"Good land, aren't you men terrible? You're always wanting something done.'



"What is a square meal

"It's one when you kin feel the corners stickin' you'

### Silence His Strong Point.

Among the few who have a perfect genius for silence is a certain well-known artist, whose reticence is the amusement and wonder of all who know him

A friend who had dropped into his studio one day was vainly endeavoring to draw Mr. H—— into conversation, when the artist's brother appeared in the doorway

"Hello, Tom!" said the brother

"Hello, John'" returned Tom, looking up from his easel with a smile.

John wandered about the room for fifteen minutes, turned over his brother's latest work and then, going toward the door, stopped long enough to say "Good-by Tom'

Good-by, John." was the hearty rejoinder

Tom painted on for some minutes and then, in an unwonted burst of confidence, he said, warmly, to his amused friend, 'I was glad Tom called' Haven't seen him for a month'"

### Never to Be Forgotten.

The lecturer had been describing some of the sights he had seen abroad

"There are some spectacles one never forgets

"I wish you would tell me where I can get a pair," exclaimed an old lady in the audience "I am always forgetting mine"

### Times Change.

"I see that Fifi Flubdub, the actress, is so [illegible] that she swoons at the [illegible] of tuberoses. So her management has to watch her constantly

"Um! Time brings great changes I knew her once. She was raised in a block next to a gas house '

### A Matter of Course.

In a Southern State there was a worthy clergyman who devoted most of his income to the poor. In this divine's parish there was a man to whom he gave every week a great many of the necessities of life. Remembering how the clergyman had to deny himself in order to give so generously, a woman once said to the pensioner:

"Don't you think it is very good of Doctor Clarke to look after you like this and give you all these nice things?"

Whereupon the pensioner, who was at the moment dining upon the good man's bounty, looked up with his mouth full and, with an expression of astonishment, asked

"Good of him? Why, what's he for?"

### A Serious Question.

"Faither!" said the youngest Scot.

"Noo," said his sire, "if it's ony mair of yer stoopid questions, awa' ye gang I've telt ye a'ready that I dinna ken whither [illegible] dooer or a do-guider, or whither the seat o' war is what the standin' army sits doon on. If it's a redeecloius question of that kind, awa' ye gang to bed!"

'But paw, it's a seerious question."

"Weel, oot wi' it!"

"I want to knaw, paw, what the Dead Sea died of?"

"Awa' to bed wi' ye!"

### A Bright Girl.

Three young chaps were eating in the dining room at one of Pittsburgh's pleasure parks, and incidentally were trying to flirt with the pretty waitress. After devouring everything in sight, they decided to have some ice cream and cake.

"What kind will you have? Devil's food, plain or nut cakes?" asked the waitress.

"Give me devil's food," said two of them, and the other asked for walnut cake.

"Two devils and one nut," cried the bright young girl.

### Drew a Crowd.

Out of a shop entrance he dashed with a small length of cane, with which he manfully attacked a rainpipe

He struck it repeatedly, then thrust it upward as far as it would go Next moment the passers-by heard the familiar squeaking of an imprisoned rat Women fearfully ran away, with uplifted skirts, men and boys gathered round The man prodded and prodded, and the squeaks became shriller.

Carts drew up by the curb, and advice came from all quarters

"Get a long stick mate

Bring a dog, some one

"Let him come out, and we'll get him"

But the hunter took no notice He meant to catch that rat in his own way At length, when a crowd of about 100 had gathered, he turned round and produced a tiny whistle from his mouth

"Ladies and gentlemen," he cried "the funniest toy of the age! Amuses boys and girls for hours. Imitate every bird ever known as well as mice and rats Roars of laughter when used at a m[illegible] gentlemen!

### Business of Matrimony.

"At ten o'clock tomorrow morning I will be prepared to answer your proposal of marriage"

"Why the delay?"

"It gives me time to play fair with another suitor. If he doesn't come across when he hears your offer, I'll take you'"

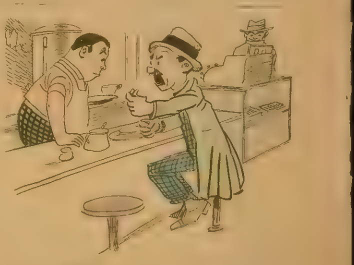
'Under the circumstances I must withdraw my offer'

Must you? Then under the circumstances I waive the other chance and take you."

### Mandy's Compliment.

The morning after the coming out party, Mandy, the cook, thus greeted the young girl for whom it was given

"Miss Annie, yo' sho' did look sweet las' night' My, I hardly knowed yo'. Dey wasn't a thing erbout yo' dat looked natchel'"



The Customer—"Hey' I bit on a button in me sandwich an' broke a tooth"

The Purveyor—"That was no button That was the hot dog license tag."

# GET A LIFE MEMBERSHIP

## IN THE

# LAND AND CREDIT LEAGUE

## OF AMERICA

***Incorporated Under the Laws of the District of Columbia to Further the Interests of Farming in America***

## PURPOSES of the LEAGUE

*(Quoted from the Certificate of Incorporation)*

**1**—"To facilitate the purchase and sale of farm lands by those not now in possession of farm lands."

**2**—"To place in economic use those lands adapted to farming operation which are held out of such use by speculators awaiting a rise in their market value, and by others."

**3**—"To develop more equitable leases and methods of renting farm lands."

**4**—"To secure the establishment of Land Courts to adjudicate, on an equitable as well as a legal basis, all difficulties arising between farm landlords and tenants and all parties to the transfer of land titles, and to simplify title transfers."

**5**—"To facilitate putting into operation the Federal Farm Loan Act, and similar laws, and to organize national farm associations."

**6**—"To improve the provisions of all laws affecting the loan of money secured by mortgage on farm lands, as the necessity for such improvement shall become evident."

**7**—"To secure the creation of additional State and Federal credit systems or facilities which shall aid in the business of farming in America by making it easier and cheaper for a present or prospective farmer to borrow money to be used in the development of his farming business, and on better terms of interest and repayment than possible otherwise, whether such a person is an owner of farm lands or not."

**8**—"To insure that food materials, farm products and agricultural implements shall pay reasonable transportation tariffs and costs."

**9**—"To secure more equitable regulations and treatment from transportation companies."

**10**—"To secure, enlarge and improve storage warehousing facilities under State and Federal control."

**11**—"To organize local, district and State divisions of this League under proper lawful circumstances for more powerful and combined activities for mutual benefit."

**12**—"To further in every way possible the interests of American farmers."

.The Land and Credit League of America is a powerfu organization formed for the purpose of bettering farming conditions thruout America.

"Helping the Farmer to Help Himself" is the object of the League. Its basis is cooperation. The League is not designed to make money for itself, but to make the business of its members more profitable.

This organization needs you and all your friends as members. The bigger the membership the stronger the organization will be and the more quickly it will accomplish its purposes.

Heretofore the best you could do was to wish for the things you needed. Now you can fight for them thru the powerful influence of this great organization.

If you need money with which to enlarge or develop your farming business, and need this money at lower rates of interest and on better terms of repayment than you have been able to obtain in the past, the League will help you to organize a local loan association for this purpose; if you desire better treatment and more equitable rates from the railroads; if land speculators and absentee landlords are holding back the development of your community and so interfering with the development of your farming business, you should become a member of this League and help to remove these interferences with individual and community progress. These are problems which can best be solved by concerted action of a large organization of business farmers. Join The Land and Credit League of America and help your own and other communities.

### WORK OF THIS LEAGUE

is conducted as follows:

1 -Every person who joins is entitled to full benefits of membership, as outlined in the Purposes of the League.

2—Members may organize themselves into divisions of the League, of not less than five members, for the purpose of considering and solving local conditions and problems and managing their local affairs.

3—Local divisions may group themselves into District or State branches for the purpose of cooperating with each other and furthering the larger aims of the League.

4—The League will secure individual members, aid them in forming local divisions and district branches, and assist them in accomplishing the League purposes. The League itself is the central organization which cements the local and district branches into one great body. It is the clearing house of information and aid.

### BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP

The benefits you as an individual will get will depend upon your needs and problems as well as the larger needs of the community or State in which you live. The object of the League is not only to solve these larger national and State problems, but also to help individual farmers and small neighborhood groups to solve their own problems. Members will be served in every way possible, both as individuals and groups.

Cooperative associations feel the need of a great, strong organization which will unite their forces to work for those larger rights which it is beyond their power to obtain unaided. The Land and Credit League of America has been organized for this very purpose.

In serving these needs of individuals and groups there will be published regularly thruout the year bulletins reporting the work of the League and giving information regarding the economic problems of farming.

### ARE YOU ELIGIBLE?

Under the terms of the Certificate of Incorporation, "Any male or female inhabitant of America over the age of 18 years is eligible to membership in this League, provided his or her present or prospective chief source of income is thru the ownership of, or the operation of or labor on, a farm in America."

All you need to do to become a member is to fill out the Application Coupon printed below and send it to **The Land and Credit League of America, Munsey Bldg., Washington, D. C.**, with 4 cents in stamps to pay for postage and cost of mailing your Certificate of Membership.

On receipt of your Application, the Certificate showing you are a life member will be filled out, stamped with the official seal of the League and sent to you.

## THERE IS NO COST

On receipt of Application, your name and address will be registered by the League, Life Membership Certificate issued, stamped with official seal of Corporation and mailed to you. No dues, fees or assessments can be levied against members; this is specified in the Certificate of Incorporation granted by the District of Columbia under the direct supervision of Congress. There is no capital stock to be sold, no bonds; no real estate or development project to be boomed. The League is what is known as a non-profit sharing corporation—it can neither earn nor pay a profit. You undertake no financial obligation when you join the Land and Credit League of America.

## SEND APPLICATION NOW

We want you for a life member. It costs you nothing to join or belong to this great organization. You will get the benefit of the work done by this League. You should do your share and do it now. You have much to gain and nothing to lose.

**THE LAND AND CREDIT LEAGUE OF AMERICA (INC.)**

**MUNSEY BUILDING, WASHINGTON, D. C.**

------ CUT OUT HERE ------

### APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

**The Land and Credit League of America (Inc.)**

**Munsey Building, Washington, D. C.** CL

I hereby apply for membership in The Land and Credit League of America (Inc.). I am interested in farming. I send you herewith 4 cents (stamps) for postage and cost of mailing my Certificate of Membership.

Name..

Town State

Street No., P. O., or R. F. D...

The object of this League is for mutual benefit. There are no dues of any kind.

# Fires in the Night

## Or, In Pioneer Days

### By Willis E. Link

[Copyright 1916 by W. D. Boyce Co.]

Begun in No. 50, December 9. Subscriptions can begin with that issue or back copies can be obtained from news stands, our agents or by mail from office of publication.

## CHAPTER IX
## THE TRAGEDY.

TINA'S piercing cry almost in his ear came so unexpectedly that Conway perceptibly recoiled, and at this instant, as another glare of light illuminated the room, he caught sight of a figure standing inside the doorway

"The devil!" ejaculated the man, in a tone of surprise and disappointment.

Up to this moment he had been carried away with elation and satisfaction because every detail of his scheme had worked so smoothly, and he was alone with the beautiful girl with whom he was daily and hourly becoming more and more infatuated. The frightful lightning, the crashing thunder, the roaring wind or the pounding of the rain against the building, all this war of the elements was an aid which isolated the two from the rest of humanity. Consequently he was far more disturbed at the sight of a third person than he had been at the awful power of nature.

"No, not his satanic majesty, only Percy Howard; but you are surely a devoted follower of the Evil One, or you would be more careful as to your actions while these bolts of God are flying around so fearfully," and a mocking laugh came from the speaker.

Conway had loosened his arms, and with a murmured "Thank God!" Tina sank weakly upon a seat.

"How came you here?" demanded Conway, savagely.

"On horseback," answered Howard.

"You know what I mean," Conway impatiently exclaimed. "So you were following me?" he sneered.

"Is that anything strange?" was asked, and Tina felt that there was a peculiar meaning in the tone and question.

"You and I will settle some matters before many days," spoke Conway, with intense vindictiveness.

"Until then, we'll be partners in some lines of effort," coolly responded Howard. "Just now we all will wait until this storm is over, and as it seems to be slacking we may not have to remain here more than another hour."

He drew off a heavy rain-coat and threw it across a bench, then seated himself upon another. For the next hour not a word was spoken by any of the three. The storm spent itself, and the moon, waning to the last quarter, occasionally shone thru the broken clouds. Howard arose and felt his way thru the gloom to a window.

"We had better be going," he said, returning to pick up his rain-coat and throwing it across his arm. "It will be so hard upon me to ride that horse home that I think I had better use the buggy with Miss Pennington," he went on, as if there would be no question about this arrangement.

"Have things any way you please," acquiesced Conway, with an oath.

In a few minutes the three had left the prairie schoolhouse, Tina in the buggy with Howard and Conway upon the horse which the rider had secured to a post when he arrived at the beginning of the storm. Without a word, Conway soon dashed ahead and disappeared in the darkness, leaving the two to follow at their pleasure.

The rain had washed off and pounded down the road, and as the tracks had not yet been cut up by passing vehicles, most of the way was quite good going. The air was fresh and pleasant, but for fear that Tina might become chilly because of her thin garments, Howard insisted upon her using the rain-coat.

"My clothing is so much heavier than yours, I do not need protection," he declared.

The trip home would not have been at all disagreeable to Tina had she been with the one who was her companion of the day before—for it was now past midnight. But the distance seemed long and lonesome as mile after mile was traversed and not a word was uttered by the driver. She had tried to begin a conversation, but with no success. Once she attempted to thank him for his kindness and assistance, but was shortly informed that he did not wish any thanks from her. Hurt and half-angry, Tina subsided and made no further attempt at being sociable

A faint glow began to light up the eastern sky as the two drew up in front of the Older dwelling. Tina asked Howard to remain and have his horse attended to, but her invitation was curtly declined. Without waiting for any expression of thanks, he quickly turned his horse and was off toward the Conway farm.

Mrs. Older was surprised when she unlocked the door to admit Tina not to see Doctor Donald in sight, but she made no comment. It was plain to be seen that something had gone wrong with the girl, and after a good rest probably an explanation would be forthcoming. So Tina was hurried to her room with instructions not to leave her bed until she was good and ready.

It was so good to be at home and in her own room again. It was about this same time the morning before that she left her bed happy in anticipating what the day would be to her. Since then it seemed almost as if ages had passed and the world was not the same. Show day at Algona had proved to be like the Fourth at Ledyard—a day of happiness closing with a night of trouble. Only the result at Algona was a more serious proposition than was the case at Ledyard, for now she was sorely perplexed as to her future course of action.

Thinking of these things, she crept into bed, but sleep would not come to her. Persistently the question came to her as to what she ought to do. Should she tell all, or a part, or nothing of her experiences during the night?

No, she could not tell all, for she was bound by her promise to Conway not to state a word about being decoyed into the Bentley house and the deliverance from her imprisonment. Of course Conway had treated her shamefully later on, but that fact did not absolve her from keeping her word. She could give no account of the time spent at the schoolhouse, for if she told this much she must tell more.

Even if she considered herself justified in giving information of all or a part of the events which had occurred within the past few hours, would it be best? It was plain that some secret tie bound Conway, Howard and, probably, Bentley together in a fast and loose compact hard to comprehend, and would not all three unite in discrediting anything she might relate? What could she really prove in such a case? Nothing. Anyhow, her word was given and she must be faithful to her promise, for, if Conway had not placed implicit confidence in her, where and what would she be at this hour? A thrill of horror almost made her heart stop beating as she thought of what might have been.

To remain silent was going to make her road a hard one to travel. What could the one she loved so dearly think if she uttered no word to explain her actions? To plead for his love and trust under such a condition was utterly out of reason. He would think, and she could not blame him, that she should show her perception of the situation by keeping nothing concealed. If her lips remained closed, then what of the future? Undoubtedly the man of all men to her would pass out of her life. At this thought, a wave of despair swept over her, making her bury her face in the pillow to stifle her moans of anguish

When Tina grew calmer, Jack Older and his wife came into her mind. They had been so good to her, but now perhaps, they would ask her to seek a home elsewhere. She could not blame them, but where would there be a door open to her? Every glance toward herself would be one of suspicion. She could not undergo such ordeals—she would appeal to the man and wife with all the power she possessed to have confidence yet a little while. God had been with her so far. Perhaps in a few hours He would roll some of the dark clouds away from her sky. At this thought she crept out of the bed and knelt upon the floor while she prayed to the Almighty for His help and guidance. It was now daylight, but with a feeling of hope and comfort she sought her bed once more, and was soon in a peaceful slumber

When she awoke the sun was high in the sky. She dressed quickly and went downstairs, not without misgivings as to the ordeal she might have to pass thru. The house was deserted, and she comprehended that the Olders had gone to Ledyard to attend church, for it was Sunday. She had heretofore gone with them, but this morning they had not awakened her, for which she was truly thankful. It put off the hour of trial a little longer, when she might be able to undergo it better.

With this thought in mind, she gathered up something to eat and was somewhat surprised to find that she was really hungry. She had just finished her late breakfast when, glancing out of the window, she saw her lover tying his

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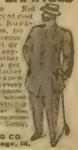

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Make More Money on Furs!

Make more on your furs by sending them to us. Our prices are famous amongst hunters and trappers all [illegible] We were the first to get out a class and price list [illegible]

Becker Bros. & Co. Dept. E5, 416 N. Dearborn St., Chicago
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$200 GRAFONOLA

This model the Grafonola "De Luxe" is the second reward in our Grand Prize Contest. It is of attractive appearance, and its design is one that particularly lends itself to depth of tone chamber. You can have the stage of the world in your home, if you own this Columbia Grafonola and records. Orchestral, operatic, instrumental music—sombre or joyous, classic bright; whatever you desire; whichever great artist you want to hear—your wish is a reality as soon as expressed. Or, perhaps, you enjoy dancing, if so, this wonderful instrument will play all popular music with proper time accompaniment.

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3==Grand Prizes==3

It is up to you to decide whether you are going to own and drive this splendid, new Overland Car next summer. In appearance this $635.00 Touring Car is all that you would demand or expect in a much higher priced car. The body is long and low, with that harmony in the blending of lines that marks the true streamline type. There are no projecting door hinges or handles; no obstructions on the running boards; nothing about the whole car to mar the clean smoothness of its lines. This car will actually be given **free** and **freight prepaid** to the winner in our Grand Prize Contest, which closes at midnight, May 31st, 1917. In addition to the automobile, we will also give two other grand prizes, and will pay every contestant in premiums or a liberal cash commission. In case of a tie for any of the prizes offered, duplicate prizes will be awarded tying contestants.

KITCHEN CABINET

This cabinet is the third reward in our Grand Prize Contest. Every housewife will welcome it as the fulfillment of a long cherished dream. For what efficient home-maker does not desire an up-to-date household convenience like this? It is a time-saver, a step-saver, a patience-saver, and a nerve-saver. All of your kitchen work can be done at it. You can bake your bread, dress your turkey [illegible] turns about the kitchen to the preparation of a day's food supply.

SEND FOR OUR EASY PLAN

**In addition** to the opportunity of winning the **Automobile, Grafonola,** and **Kitchen Cabinet**, each active contestant will be given just the things that grown folks, and even boys and girls want—Cash Rewards, Tennis Rackets, Flashlights, Steam Engines, Watches, Jewelry, Dolls, China Sets, Silverware, etc., you to select them yourself. So you see that this is not a contest in which a few win all the prizes and the others receive nothing in return for their efforts. Bear in mind that you have **everything to gain**, and nothing to lose. This contest is open to every man, woman, boy and girl in the United States, except those living in the postal districts of Chicago. It will be conducted in an absolute fair and square manner. Our records will be open for inspection, after the close of the period. We know you are interested in our plan, so **don't delay**, but fill out the coupon **at once** or drop us a postal or letter for particulars. We will then give you **1000 free points** to your credit toward winning the Overland Car, and will send you our easy plan, with beautiful descriptive circular of the prizes, premiums, rules, etc. **Remember, you are placed under no obligations or expense by signing the coupon.**

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horse to the hitching-post. Her heart gave a bound of elation, but the next moment she fled to her room in a panic of distress.

"I haven't decided what I shall do—I can't meet him until I have made up my mind," she sobbed, throwing herself upon the bed.

There she lay while rap after rap echoed loudly from the door below, and at the sound she shivered as with an ague chill. After three or four efforts, the raps ceased, and peeping thru the crack of the curtain she saw the Doctor drive away.

He had remained in Algona until an hour after the storm had spent its force, then had started home, as he knew there were patients who needed attention. It was a long, miserable drive, for he had been unable to obtain the least trace of the girl so dear to him, and naturally his mind was torn with anxiety during the long ride.

It was broad daylight when he arrived at Ledyard, and he put the horse in its stable, planning to let it rest a while, then drive to the Older house and inform them of Tina's disappearance. He went to his office, and from force of habit, as he entered the door, felt in a box fastened to the casing for any note which might be left there. He found a slip of paper, and as he stepped into the office, he read.

"Tina Pennington is at home uninjured. Do not ask her any questions."

The Doctor dropped into his big chair with mingled feelings of astonishment, relief and perplexity. Who had dropped the note into the box? The writing was a scrawl, and not even the sex of the scribbler could be guessed. What did the writer know? How did Tina get home? What had she been doing? Why all this secrecy about her actions? These and other questions came to him until he was in a frenzy of unrest.

At last he hastened to breakfast, for which he had but little appetite, then called upon a patient whom he could not neglect. He felt sure that the Olders would be in to attend church services, and upon returning from his professional visit he was not disappointed in seeing them drive into town—but Tina was not with them. He felt a peculiar diffidence in making any inquiry, but he managed to learn that Tina was at home and probably in bed.

He did not wait long to hitch up his horse and start out into the country to call upon another patient. As he could go by the Older farm, he chose that route, with the intention of stopping to see the one who was so constantly in his mind. Disappointed and humiliated at receiving no response to his repeated rappings—for he felt that he surely must have awakened the girl—he continued his drive in a still more unsettled state of mind.

After attending to his patient, the Doctor started back to Ledyard. This time, as he passed the Kingsley farm, he particularly noticed the fine barn that was nearly completed, and as such structures as this were not so common as today, he stopped his horse to gaze at the building. Thinking he might distract his mind from Tina and things concerning her, he decided to investigate the interior of the big barn. He saw no signs of any person around the premises—the Kingsleys were probably at church in Ledyard. Tying his horse to a post, he entered the building, and remained a half-hour or more languidly strolling around and inspecting some details of the structure. When his interest flagged, he left the building, and was untying his horse when the Kingsleys drove up.

After greeting the man and wife, the Doctor stated the reason he had stopped, and was assured he was far from being a trespasser. As he pulled into the road to resume his way back to Ledyard, a boy riding a horse came rapidly along. The Doctor was hailed and informed that he was wanted a mile away to attend a case of sudden illness. He complied with the summons, and did not leave the bedside of his patient until nearly sundown, then he drove to Ledyard without passing the Older farm.

Tina was out upon the porch of her home when the Doctor stopped at the Kingsleys'. She had thus stationed herself intending to call to her lover when he returned from what was undoubtedly a professional visit at some domicile farther up the road. Right or wrong, she had decided to tell him everything, let the consequences be what they might. She could not let anything stand between herself and the man who possessed her heart. She saw him stop near the big barn less than a hundred rods away, for she could tell who the driver was by several details plain to herself. She was impatient while waiting for him to drive on again, but keen was her disappointment when he left the buggy and went toward the barn. An obstacle prevented any further view of him, and she became greatly agitated while waiting for him to reappear. She saw the Kings-

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# Classified Want Ads

## Classified Want Ad Information

The rate for one insertion in Chicago Ledger and one insertion in The Saturday Blade is 30 cents a word, minimum 14 words, less 3% for cash. Each initial and group of figures is counted as a word, and the name and address are also counted. This is the minimum rate; neither more nor less is charged, irrespective of size of ad or number of insertions. *An ad may appear in both publications of the same week, or in the Blade of one week and the Ledger of the next

W. D. BOYCE CO., Publisher, 500 N. Dearborn St. CHICAGO, ILL.

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**TRAVELING SALESMEN WANTED—EXPE**rience unnecessary. Earn big pay while you learn at home during spare time. Only eight weeks required. Hundreds of good positions open. Write today for large list of openings and testimonials from hundreds of students we have placed in positions paying $100 to $500 per month. Address nearest office. Dept. B-37, National Salesmen Training Ass'n, Chicago, New York, San Francisco.

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**EVERY HOME ON FARM, IN SMALL TOWN** or suburbs [illegible] will buy the wonderful Aladdin kerosene (coal-oil) mantle lamp; five times as bright as electric, tested and recommended by Government and 34 leading universities, awarded gold medal, one farmer cleared over $[illegible] in 6 weeks, hundreds with rigs or autos earning $100 to $300 per month. No capital required, we furnish goods on time to reliable men. Write quick for distributor's proposition and lamp for free trial. Mantle Lamp Co., [illegible] Aladdin Bldg., Chicago, Ill.

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**AGENTS—SELL RICH-LOOKING IMPORTED** 36x68 rugs. $1 each. Carter, Tenn., sold [illegible] in 4 days. Profit $57. You can do same. Write for sample offer selling plan; exclusive territory. Sample rug by parcel post prepaid. [illegible] Condon, Importer, Stonington, Maine.

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leys drive up, and witnessed their chat with the Doctor, the appearance of the boy on horseback, and then the hurried departure of the one she was nearly frantic to meet again.

She had a struggle to calm her perturbation before the Olders arrived. She had dreaded this moment, but she really had no occasion to do so, for the married couple supposed some lovers' tiff had occurred between the two "young simpletons" and that it would not be long before both would "kiss and make up." They greeted Tina warmly, and this helped her to forget her distress.

She had done nothing toward the dinner, for she had thought the two might stay in Ledyard to visit some family, but now she hurried to assist Mrs. Older in preparing an appetizing meal. The three sat down to the table, after an hour's delay, and chatted gayly until the last mouthful was swallowed.

There were moments when Tina's thoughts flew to her problems, but these matters did not seem so serious as they had first appeared. After she had confided in her lover—for surely he would believe and trust her—she would follow his advice as to how much she should impart to her benefactors, the Olders. The Doctor's driving away as he did was very disappointing, but she would see him within another day if she had to go to Ledyard to do so.

As the trio pushed back from the table, Tina chanced to glance thru the open door of the kitchen, and she uttered an exclamation of wonder at seeing Bill Kingsley rushing toward the house. The next moment he had burst into the room without any ceremony, pale of face and showing intense excitement in act and expression.

"Jay Bentley is lying out behind my barn dead," he exclaimed hoarsely, before any one could utter a word. "He has been shot," he went on in further explanation, as the three standing around the table gazed at him in speechless amazement.

"Murdered?" articulated Older finally, in a tone of interrogation.

"It looks that way," emphatically replied Kingsley.

As the words came to her, Tina grew faint and dizzy. Almost blindly she felt for a chair and dropped down upon the seat. The others in the room were too absorbed in the matter at hand to notice her agitation.

Into her mind had flashed the recollection of having seen the Doctor stop for some time at the Kingsley barn. What was he doing there? Had he seen Bentley? It must be, and what had transpired? It might have been something maddening to her lover—perhaps Bentley had told him something about the events of the night before, coloring the matter to suit his own purpose to discredit her. Had the Doctor wildly taken vengeance into his own hands and become a murderer?

Some such thoughts as these flashed into Tina's brain, and out of the jumble in her mind came a resolution to keep her mouth closed, at least for a time. To talk now might involve the man she loved. She did not understand why Bentley was at the barn or why the Doctor was there, but surely the latter was innocent of this crime, altho she must say nothing which might put him in jeopardy.

In spite of herself, a sensation of intense relief stole into her mind at the thought that she never again need fear anything from Jay Bentley. This consolation went far toward restoring normal conditions to mind and body, and she stepped out upon the porch with Mrs. Older to watch the men rush to the barn, where they soon mounted horses, Older to ride to Ledyard to give information there, and Kingsley to inform some of the surrounding neighbors. As they departed, Mrs. Kingsley put in an appearance, declaring that she had no desire, under the circumstances, to be the only person at home.

While the three women sat upon the porch, Mrs. Kingsley told the little she knew in regard to the discovery of Bentley's dead body. After arriving from church, Bill had put up the team and then had remained in the house until after dinner. After he was thru eating, something needed his attention at the barn, and while there he had occasion to go behind the building. He was amazed when he almost stumbled over the outstretched body of a man. In a moment Kingsley knew he was gazing upon a corpse and recognized the features. He rushed to the house to inform his wife, then hurried to the Older home. There was nothing else to relate, and Tina slipped up to her room where she could be alone.

In an hour people were arriving at the Kingsley barn from every direction. When the dead body was examined, a tiny hole over the heart left no room for doubt as to the manner in which Jay Bentley's career had been brought to a sudden close, but speculation became intense as to the one who committed the deed. It surely was a murder, for no firearm of any kind could be found. Time and again Kingsley repeated the story of how he found the body of the murdered man, and on one such occasion he thoughtlessly mentioned the meeting with Doctor Donald upon returning home from church. Kingsley bit his tongue, for he immediately realized where suspicion might drift, and such a thought in connection with the Doctor was preposterous.

Among the assemblage of men Fred Conway and Percy Howard moved around quietly, with little to say, but listening to the talk of others. After it was noised around that Doctor Donald had been in the barn at noon, Conway remarked about the affair upon the street in Ledyard which had resulted in Bentley being sent to the ground, and added that it might be possible that Jay had attacked the Doctor the night of the Fourth. Conway went on to state that it had come to him lately that Bentley could have committed the act, then hastened out upon the prairie and pretended to be drunk when he, Conway, came up. Of course Bentley had had no part in the affair the night of the stable fire, but Doctor Donald had doubted the man's innocence. In fact—and Conway stated this frankly and positively as if he knew—Doctor Donald hated Bentley.

At first men stood aghast at the idea of connecting the young practitioner with this crime, but as the afternoon wore away the atmosphere became more and more charged with doubt. In the meantime, Bentley's body was brought into the barn and the coroner was summoned from Algona. At sundown they dispersed, leaving a guard to watch over the corpse during the night.

The news of the tragedy had not reached the family where Doctor Donald spent most of the afternoon attending upon one of the members, but before reaching Ledyard upon his return some particulars were told him. Such a crime so near home was a shock, of course, but nothing to what came to him an hour afterward when he learned that the finger of suspicion was pointing to himself as the murderer.

## CHAPTER X

## THE INQUEST

DEATH is so very, very common, but it always seems so very uncommon. Especially are we stirred when one meets the "grim monster" with no chance to think ere he crosses the line into the unknown country from which there is no returning. A man may not be fit to live, according to general opinion, but when he is struck down without warning, the event grips us with a peculiar power.

Thus it was in the case of Jay Bentley. The news spread like wildfire over the prairie country, and a great crowd gathered at the Kingsley barn, some coming from ten miles away, where the inquest was held the next day after the tragedy. Morbid curiosity, the mystery connected with the crime, and interest in the person whose name was mentioned in connection with the affair, all were reasons for a sensation such as had never swept over this section of country in its short history.

The barn had not yet been filled with hay from the prairie, for the "wild grass" would not be cut for several weeks. Every point of vantage inside the structure was occupied, even astride the crossbeams above the driveway were two score boys. Over the assembly a solemn stillness prevailed, and all eyes were constantly seeking the same spot in the center of a cleared open space. There each end of a wide board rested upon a box and upon this improvised bier lay a figure over which had been thrown a white sheet, and under this covering in his last sleep lay Jay Bentley.

In the dwelling not far away several women were gathered, and among the number were Mrs. Older and Tina. The latter could not think of staying behind alone, altho silently she was suffering an agony of apprehension. She knew that dark clouds were gathering around the one she loved so dearly, but in spite of all that might be presented—in spite of what she had seen—her heart had no room for doubting his innocence.

About ten o'clock in the forenoon the coroner arrived, and soon afterward three farmers were impaneled as a jury. A doctor from Algona examined the dead body and gave some professional testimony. William Kingsley was then called.

The witness stated that he had hitched up the team, and with his wife had started for church in Ledyard about ten o'clock in the morning. On the way they had passed the deceased, who was walking rapidly and seemed very much preoccupied, so much so that he did not look up or speak when he was passed. After church services the witness had returned home, and just as he and his wife arrived in front of the barn, Doctor Donald was ready to drive away. The Doctor did not seem excited or in haste, but perhaps he did have a worried air. A boy came along on a horse presently and called the Doctor away to the former's home, where a member

# City Physicians Explain Why They Prescribe Nuxated Iron

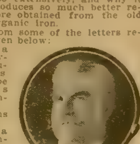
## To Make Beautiful, Healthy Women and Strong Vigorous Men

### NOW BEING USED BY OVER FIVE MILLION PEOPLE DAILY

**Quickly transforms the flabby flesh, toneless tissues, and pallid cheeks of weak, anaemic men and women into a perfect glow of health and beauty—Often increases the strength of delicate, nervous, run-down folks 200 per cent in two weeks' time.**

New York, N. Y.—It is conservatively estimated that over five million people daily in this country alone are taking Nuxated Iron. Such astonishing results have been reported from its use both by doctors and laymen, that a number of physicians in various parts of the country have been asked to explain why they prescribe it so extensively, and why it apparently produces so much better results than were obtained from the old forms of inorganic iron.

Extracts from some of the letters received are given below:



Dr. King, a New York physician and author, says "There can be no vigorous iron men without iron.

Pallor means anaemia.

Anaemia means deficiency. The skin of anaemic men and women is pale. The flesh flabby. The muscles lack tone, the brain fags and the memory fails and they often become weak, nervous, irritable, despondent and melancholy. When the iron goes from the blood of women, the roses go from their cheeks.

In the most common foods of America, the starches, sugars, table syrups, candies, polished rice, white bread, soda crackers, biscuits, macaroni, spaghetti, tapioca, sago, farina, degerminated cornmeal, no longer is iron to be found. Refining processes have removed the iron of Mother Earth from these impoverished foods, and silly methods of home cookery, by throwing down the waste-pipe the water in which our vegetables are cooked is responsible for another grave iron loss.

Therefore, if you wish to preserve your youthful vim and vigor to a ripe age, you must supply the iron deficiency in your food by using some form of organic iron, just as you would use salt when your food has not enough salt."

V. Von Unruh, M.D

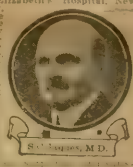
Dr. V. Von Unruh, Medical Director in Chief of the New York City Clinic, said, "I have given Nuxated Iron a fair and prolonged trial. I have been more than pleased with results and will continue its use."

Dr. Sauer, a Boston physician who has studied both in this country and in great European Medical Institutions, says: "As I have said a hundred times over organic iron is the greatest of all strength builders. If people would only throw away patent medicines and nauseous concoctions and take simple Nuxated Iron, I am convinced that the lives of thousands of persons might be saved who now die every year from pneumonia, grippe, consumption, kidney, liver and heart troubles, etc. The real and true cause which started their diseases was nothing more nor less than lack of iron in the blood.

Not long ago a man came to me who was nearly half a century old and asked me to give him a preliminary examination for life insurance. I was astonished to find him with a blood pressure of a boy of 20 and as full of vigor, vim and vitality as a young man; in fact a young man he really was notwithstanding his age. The secret, he said, was taking iron—nuxated iron had filled him with renewed life. At 30 he was in bad health; at 46 he was careworn and nearly all in—now at 50, a miracle of vitality and his face beaming with the buoyancy of youth.

Iron is absolutely necessary to enable your blood to change food into living tissue. Without it, no matter how much or what you eat, your food merely passes through you without doing you any good. You don't get the strength out of it, and as a consequence you become weak, pale and sickly-looking, just like a plant trying to grow in a soil deficient in iron.

If you are not strong or well you owe it to yourself to make the following test: See how long you can work or how far you can walk without becoming tired. Next take two five-grain tablets of ordinary nuxated iron three times per day after meals for two weeks. Then test your strength again and see how much you have gained. I have seen dozens of nervous, run-down people who were ailing all the while double their strength and endurance and entirely rid themselves of all symptoms of dyspepsia, liver and other troubles, in from ten to fourteen days' time, simply by taking iron in the proper form. And this, after they had in some cases been doctoring for months without obtaining any benefit. But don't take the old forms of reduced iron, iron acetate, or tincture of iron simply to save a few cents. The iron demanded by Mother Nature for the red coloring matter in the blood of her children is, alas! not that kind of iron. You must take iron in a form that can be easily absorbed and assimilated to do you any good, otherwise it may prove worse than useless. Many an athlete and prize-fighter has won the day simply because he knew the secret of great strength and endurance and filled his blood with iron before he went into the affray; while many another has gone down in inglorious defeat simply for the lack of iron."


S. C. Jacques, M.D.

Dr. Schuyler C. Jacques, Visiting Surgeon of St. Elizabeth's Hospital, New York City, said: "I have never before given out any medical information or advice for publication, as I ordinarily do not believe in it. But in the case of Nuxated Iron I feel I would be remiss in my duty not to mention it. I have taken it myself and given it to my patients with most surprising and satisfactory results. And those who wish quickly to increase their strength, power and endurance will find it a most remarkable and wonderfully effective remedy."

Dr. James, late of the United States Public Health Service, says, "Patients in an enervated and devitalized state of health, those for instance convalescing from protracted fevers, those suffering from a long-standing case of anaemia, all such people, in my opinion, need iron. Of late, there has been brought to my attention, Nuxated Iron. In practice, I have found this an ideal restorative and up-building agent in these cases above mentioned."

NOTE—Nuxated Iron, which is prescribed and recommended above by physicians in such a great variety of cases, is not a patent medicine nor secret remedy, but one which is well known to druggists and whose iron constituents are widely prescribed by eminent physicians everywhere. Unlike the older inorganic iron products it is easily assimilated, does not injure the teeth, make them black nor upset the stomach; on the contrary, it is a most potent remedy, in nearly all forms of indigestion, as well as for nervous run-down conditions. The manufacturers have such great confidence in Nuxated Iron that they offer to forfeit $100.00 to any charitable institution if they cannot take any man or woman under 60 who lacks iron and increase their strength 200 per cent. or over in four weeks' time provided they have no serious organic trouble. They also offer to refund your money if it does not at least double your strength and endurance in ten days' time. It is dispensed by all good druggists.

of the family had been taken violently ill.

The witness had placed his team in the barn and fed them oats, and then had gone into the house, where he remained until after dinner. After this meal, he had gone to the barn again and put hay into the horses' manger. Some pigs in a temporary pen out behind the barn were squealing vociferously, and he had gone out there to give them a few ears of corn. He was astonished to see a man lying outstretched upon the ground, and was greatly shocked when a closer view showed the man to be Jay Bentley, undoubtedly dead.

The clothing was soaked with blood in places, and a pool of blood had formed upon the ground by the man's side. No weapon of any kind was in sight, but the coat had been pulled to one side as if some one had rifled the inside pocket. The witness had satisfied himself that the dead man had been shot thru or near the heart, and then had hastened to the house to inform his wife. He then had run over to the Older place, leaving his wife to follow at her leisure, and had given the alarm.

At that portion of the evidence where Kingsley told of finding the body of Bentley, coroner, jury and witness went to the spot behind the barn, followed by a large portion of the assemblage, and all stared at the blood-stained ground as if powerfully fascinated.

Before being excused, the witness was questioned in regard to the length of time which had elapsed between the tragedy and the discovery, but could not give any positive answer. As the blood appeared to be clotting, it might have been two or three hours—yes, perhaps, an hour.

The next witness was Mrs. Kingsley, who was called from the house, and she corroborated the statements of her husband as to passing Bentley upon the road and meeting Doctor Donald upon arriving at home.

The next witness was the boy who called the Doctor away, and he simply testified to this effect.

Doctor Donald was then called, and he stepped forward, pale of face, and plainly forcing himself to a state of composure, for he realized that he was face to face with a serious situation. The evening before, when an intimation came to him of what was being whispered around, he was disgusted, and later on had grown thoroly angry, but now a sort of terror was clutching at his heart, as if some monster was reaching out a giant hand to crush him within its grasp.

In giving his testimony the Doctor struggled hard to retain his composure, and seeing this, more than one individual glanced knowingly at some one near. The previous forenoon, the witness began, he had left Ledyard to make a professional visit some distance from town. Returning, as he passed the Kingsley barn, an impulse came to him [illegible] and inspect the building, for it was the finest structure of the kind in all the country around—every one indorsed this assertion. He had entered the barn and viewed the interior to his satisfaction, then had left the building, untied his horse, stepped into his buggy, and was about to drive away when Mr. and Mrs. Kingsley drove up. The rest the jury knew.

"How long were you in the barn?" asked the coroner.

"At least half an hour, I should judge," was the reply.

"What were you doing during this time?" was the next question.

"I suppose I was looking around at things," came a hesitating answer.

"You 'suppose'? Don't you know?" sharply demanded the official.

"Well, after coming in here I don't remember giving my attention to things as much as I might have done, but I walked back and forth along this driveway while I remained inside," and the witness flushed, for he recalled what was upon his mind at the time. To many, however, the flush indicated guilt.

"Why should you so industriously promenade this floor?" and a note of sarcasm sounded in the coroner's voice.

"Because I was worried over a personal matter having no connection whatever with Jay Bentley," replied the witness, looking squarely into the eyes of the official.

"And you were not out behind the barn?" was asked.

"No, nor did I even look out there," was the reply given in the most positive manner.

"Who lives in the house nearest this place?" suddenly asked the coroner, after quite an interval of silence.

"Mr. Older—no one else lives within double the distance" stated the witness.

"That will do, at least for the present," said the coroner, waving his hand as a sign of dismissal. "Call Mr. Older," he directed the constable, who was standing near.

Older stepped forward and was sworn.

"Where were you between eleven and twelve o'clock yesterday?" was the first question from the coroner.

"At church in Ledyard with my wife," was the prompt reply.

"Then no one was left at your home?" was an interrogation, with a shade of disappointment evident in the tone.

"Yes, a girl who stays with us was there," stated the witness.

"Her name, please."

"Tina Pennington."

"Call her," the coroner ordered the constable.

When Tina was informed that she was wanted as a witness, she nearly fainted with apprehension. Why should she be called? What would she be compelled to divulge? How could she go into the midst of that crowd of men and in the presence of that object that had once been her persecutor? But she was not allowed time for reflection, as the constable had her by the arm and led her away.

She did not raise her eyes as she entered the barn, and she trembled violently while being sworn.

"Were you at home in Mr. Older's residence between eleven and twelve o'clock yesterday?" kindly asked the coroner.

"Yes, sir," was the low reply.

"Did you notice anything occurring at this place?" was the next interrogation.

"I was in the house so could see nothing," was the answer.

"Did you hear anything?"

"No, sir."

"You were in the house all the time until Mr. and Mrs. Older returned from church?" continued the coroner, and the official seemed disappointed in having received so little information from the witness.

"No, sir. I suppose it was about twelve o'clock when I stepped out upon the porch, and I was there until they returned," faltered the girl.

"Oh!" and the coroner showed more interest. "Did you then notice anything occurring at this place?"

"Yes," came faintly.

"Please inform us fully," and the official spoke almost eagerly.

"As I was standing upon the porch I saw Doctor Donald drive up and tie his horse to the post. Then he went into the barn and stayed there about half an hour. He came out, and was just going to drive away when Mr. and Mrs. Kingsley arrived. They all seemed to talk for a minute or two; then a boy on horseback came up and the Doctor left with him."

Slowly and with apparent effort she forced the words from her lips, and only the listeners who were nearest at hand caught the almost whispered statement. She felt that the one she had named heard her voice, but she dared not raise her eyes to see. Perhaps she was sending him to the gallows and long years of misery were ahead for her.

"Did you hear any report of a pistol or gun?" the coroner asked, with solemn earnestness.

"No, sir," was the positive reply.

"Could you hear if such a sound occurred?" the coroner asked.

"I surely would, for I sometimes hear the folks talking here," and her voice grew stronger and had a ring of eagerness, for a faint hope was coming into her heart that she might, after all, brighten the situation for the man she loved.

"But you were not out upon the porch all the time during the half-hour you speak of," the coroner suggested rather than affirmed.

"Indeed I was, every second," and the eagerness of tone and expression was plainly apparent. The next instant she flushed painfully, for it seemed to her that every one there must know why she was upon the porch and so attentively watching.

"You are excused." The coroner half smiled as he spoke, for he began to comprehend something. It came to him that he had seen the Doctor on show day in Algona, and that this girl was surely with the young man.

Tina had had only one glimpse of the rigid form lying upon the board, but that was enough, and she kept her eyes elsewhere. As the constable led her from the building, she glanced up for an instant, and her eyes met those of her lover. She could scarcely restrain a glad cry and keep from throwing herself into his arms, but modesty forbade, for it seemed to her that hundreds of eyes were upon her.

A smile, however, lit up her face, and she gave a nod of recognition, but her heart grew cold at the stern look from his eyes and a formal inclination of his head. She could not censure him, for her remarkable actions since the parting in Algona were enough to hurt his pride and make him sore at heart. This tragedy was preventing her going to him as she had planned, but she hoped by another day to be able to do so. Comforting herself thus, she returned to the house near by.

"Is there any other person present who can give us the least bit of information," the coroner asked, addressing the crowd after Tina had passed out of the building.

"Perhaps I may throw some light upon this case," a voice was heard to say, and the next instant Fred Conway stepped before the coroner. After being sworn, this last witness began:

"My name, as you have heard, is Frederick Conway. I live a mile from here upon a farm which I own. I have been acquainted with the deceased for about two years. I became acquainted with him thru some business deals, and since I have lived in this part of the country he has made an effort to be sociable, but I did not care to become very intimate with him." At this point a meaning smile came over the face of the witness.

"However, I have not turned a cold shoulder to him when he visited me at my place two or three times, for I would rather have the good will of a dog than his ill will," he went on. "While in my company he has sometimes talked rather freely about some things, and it is mostly to what I have gotten from these conversations that I wish to call attention."

The witness grew extremely serious, and went on as if laboring under a trying weight of responsibility. "He told me that he hated Doctor Donald, because he, Bentley, had been knocked down one day in Ledyard by this professional athlete and boxer. It is well known that the Doctor was struck down and left unconscious the night of the Fourth. The deceased stated to me that he had been informed that the Doctor charged this assault to him, Bentley, and had threatened retaliation.

"After the fire at the barn upon the place where I formerly lived, I know that the deceased was considerably worried because this attempt upon the Doctor's life might create further complications. Knowing that Doctor Donald was so proficient in a personal encounter, the deceased was really afraid of the gentleman and hated him accordingly, and I suppose this bitter aversion was mutual, for back of all this was a cause which so often makes trouble—a woman." The witness paused as if loath to proceed, then with an air of righteous determination he spoke slowly: "The young men were rivals for the hand of the same young lady."

"That's a lie!" rang out sharply and Doctor Donald stepped forward with blazing eyes and pale face. A murmur of excitement came from the assemblage.

The remark of an old man: "It begins to look as if something would be clinched as to a motive," expressed the prevailing thought.

"Order, Doctor!" reprimanded the coroner, sternly. "We may recall you; then you can speak."

"I think if Miss Pennington should be recalled, she will admit being in the company of the deceased, and that he was anxious to marry her." Conway spoke coolly, while a gleam of triumph came from his half-closed eyes.

"You are excused, at least for the present," and the coroner waved the witness aside. "Call Miss Pennington again," the constable was directed.

In tense silence the crowd waited the few minutes until Tina appeared. Her distress and agitation were pitiable as she endeavored to calm the storm of apprehension and conjecture raging in her mind.

"Miss Pennington, were you ever in the company of the deceased?" Very gently the coroner asked the question.

"Yes," she murmured faintly, and laboring under a wild confusion of ideas, she did not comprehend the importance of an explanation of the circumstances.

Did he ever propose marriage?" again was gently asked.

"Yes," she whispered, ashamed and humiliated to acknowledge publicly that such a proposition from a person so despicable had come to her.

"That will do," said the coroner, and the constable almost had to carry the distracted girl from the building.

She could not glance at the one into whose arms she longed to throw herself, with all the intensity of her soul but he was standing like a block of marble, so rigid and white was he. Up thru the crowd the testimony just given was passed to those who had not heard, and Tina's distress and the Doctor's despair were ascribed to reasons far from the real explanation.

The coroner hesitated about giving the case to the jury. While the testimony was not conclusive, it was of such a nature that the situation looked "nasty" for the young Doctor. Another day of investigation might bring out additional facts, but would they be of sufficient importance to justify a continuance of the inquest? While the coroner was pondering over the problem, there was a movement in the crowd close at hand, and the next moment Percy Howard stepped forth.

"I wish to be sworn as a witness," he said quietly, but with a perceptible tremble in his voice.

Next week's Ledger will contain the concluding chapters of this interesting story. You will miss a great treat if you do not read it to the end. We will give you constantly the very best stories of entertainment that money will buy, so send in your subscription and take the Ledger regularly, if you are not doing so. You will not regret it.

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## Very Sensitive.

The famous author and the author who was not so famous traveled together to a seaside inn. The proprietor had had the famous author for a guest before, and he welcomed him back cordially. On the second day of their stay the famous man summoned the landlord for a confidential interview.

"I want to talk to you about this young friend of mine," he said. "He is new in the writing game, and earns very little money. As a favor to me I should like you to make his bill as small as possible."

The landlord, highly gratified at the great man's friendly attitude, even tho it touched his pocketbook, promised. Two days later he was sent for again.

"By the way," said the great man, "don't let my bill be any bigger than his. It would humiliate him. Boys like that are so extremely touchy."

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## All Is Work.

During the recitation of a college class in natural philosophy the professor observed a tall, lanky youth in a rear seat, his head drooping, his body relaxed, his eyes half closed, and his legs incumbering an adjacent aisle.

"Mr. Frazer," said the professor.

The freshman opened his eyes slowly, but did not change his pose.

"Mr. Frazer, what is work?"

"Everything is work," was the drawling reply.

"Sir," exclaimed his professor, "do you mean to tell me that is a reasonable answer to my question?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then I take it that you would like me and the class to believe that this desk is work?"

"Yes, sir," replied the youth, wearily; "it is woodwork."

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Many a man owes his success to the failure of other men.

YOUR HEART

Does it **Flutter, Palpitate or Skip Beats?** Have you **Shortness of Breath, Tenderness, Numbness, or Pain in left side, Dizziness, Fainting Spells, Spots before eyes, Sudden Starting in sleep, Nervousness, Hungry or Weak Spells, Oppressed Feeling in chest, Choking Sensation in throat, Painful to lie on left side, Sinking or Smothering Sensation, Difficult Breathing, Heart Dropsy or Swelling of feet or ankles?** If you have one or more of the above symptoms, don't fail to use **Dr. Kinsman's Heart Tablets.** Not a secret medicine. It is said that one person out of every four has a weak heart. Probably three-fourths of these do not know it, and hundreds wrongfully treat themselves for the **Stomach, Lungs, Kidneys or Nerves.** Don't take any chances when **Dr. Kinsman's Heart Tablets** are within your reach. More than 1000 endorsements furnished.

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READERS WEEKLY.

## GENTLE JABS

But the automobile lacks horse sense.

Nothing is quite so foolish as an angry fool

Sometimes it is the police that teach a man to reform.

The well man often forgets the sick man's promises.

Every woman is judge and jury unto her own husband

Many a marked man has a tattoo artist to thank for it.

The under dog gets a lot of sympathy —and that's about all.

When a man tries to stand on his dignity he puts his foot in it.

Inventors of excuses seldom require the assistance of a patent attorney.

Nothing worries some wives like absence of worry in their husbands.

Women would be happy if they could live long without getting very old

Never judge a man by his big automobile; it is possible that it isn't paid for.

If a married man doesn't grumble at home it's usually because he isn't there.

Women have a lot to say about model husbands, but they want the latest model.

Among other things that fail to impress a man favorably are his wife's relations.

A fool and his money are soon parted, but it is different with a lazy man and a shady spot

When the good man begins to swear the bad man should be on hand to get a few pointers.

When you find that the truth is in your way you may be sure that you are on the wrong road.

Brutus never licked a Roman postage stamp behind its back—and Brutus was an honorable man.

Many a girl has found herself in the [illegible]s because she was too clever at the wrong time.

You will be surprised to find how much good there is in the world if you will only take notice.

If it were not for his wife and the bunko men the average citizen would be able to save a lot of money.

[illegible] to heaven it must [illegible] awfully embarrassing for him when he encounters an ex-patient

Some men spend half their time in seeking advice and the other half in dodging the consequences thereof.

No matter how little we may love our neighbors, we can see no good reason why they shouldn't have a kindly feeling for us.

Even a wise man can't tell when a woman laughs whether she really means it or is merely trying to show off a dimple to the best advantage

# Home and Health

### FASHION NOTES.

The tailored suits and coats of today are not unlike those of last winter, but when it comes to indoor and evening dresses the change is great indeed.

Once and forever—at least for a season or two—we have said good-by to bunchy skirts and panniers. We have gone back with a rush to those long, straight lines which may be said to be universally becoming

One of the chief features of the winter season will be the long wrap-coats which have no connection whatever with the skirt underneath. These coats are quite gorgeous. Made of the softest and most supple materials, with rich trimmings of fur the latter as uncommon and unexpected as possible.

Whether they are called Babylonian or Moyen Age, or are described as chemise frocks, the new models all display a straight line from shoulder to hem which marks the silhouette of the hour. Few modes in recent years have met with such instant success and been so quickly taken up by women of all ages as this charming type of gown, which is extraordinarily smart and, at the same time, practical.

■

### FOR THE HOUSEWIFE.

Finely cut potato parings and ammonia will clean the inside of a carafe.

It is a convenience to make several medium-sized bags of cheesecloth for putting vegetables in when they have been prepared and are to be put in the refrigerator.

When buying nutmegs choose small ones; they have a better flavor than large nuts. To test nutmegs prick with a needle. If good the oil will instantly spread around the puncture.

If you are making a cake which calls for only the whites of eggs, make cookies which call for yolks; they will keep and you will have cake sufficient to last for some time.

To clean white paint that has not been varnished, put upon a plate some of the best whiting, have ready some clean, warm water and a piece of flannel. Dip into the water and squeeze nearly dry; then take as much whiting as will adhere to it, apply to the paint, when a little rubbing will instantly remove any dirt or grease. Wash off well with water and rub dry with a soft cloth. Paint thus cleaned looks equal to new and without doing the least injury to the most delicate color. It will preserve the paint much longer than if cleaned with soap, and it does not require more than half the time usually occupied in cleaning.

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### RECIPES.

FEATHER CAKE—One cup sugar two cups of flour, two-thirds cup milk, one teaspoonful of melted butter, one egg well beaten, one teaspoonful cream of tartar, one-half teaspoonful soda, one cup fresh blueberries. Bake in a quick oven. Serve hot, with or without sauce.

CRANBERRY JELLY—Place three pints of ripe cranberries in a granite or porcelain saucepan and add one and one-half pints of cold water. Bring to the boiling point, remove from the stove and mash the berries with a wooden spoon Add one pound of granulated sugar, replace upon the stove, bring to the boiling point and then cook for just one minute. Strain into a bowl that has been moistened with cold water and set aside until jellied. Serve in individual ramekins and garnish with a spray of holly

DAINTY FISH PASTIES—Take one pound of any white fish, like halibut, codfish or haddock, free it of skin and bone and pound or mash it up with two tablespoonfuls of butter and the same amount of breadcrumbs. When reduced to a paste add two well beaten eggs and salt and cayenne to taste. Blend thoroly and make into little pats about half an inch thick. Dip into egg and cracker crumbs and fry a golden brown. Place between squares of pastry which have been baked

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### NEEDLEWORK NOTES.

Remnants and left-over pieces of brocade, silk and velvet can be utilized for bags, and many beautiful combinations can be secured

Turkish towels are now being made with a deep border to be embroidered The cross-stitch and the French knots are the two most popular stitches used on Turkish towels.

Three alternate squares of pink and white poplin were used three rows deep to make a baby carriage cover. The white squares were embroidered in wreaths of green with tiny delicately colored flowers.

When working with flimsy fabrics, such as chiffon, Georgette crepe, thin silk and the like, it is an excellent plan to baste the material to tissue paper before beginning to work it at all. Do not tear away the paper until you have finished working with the material. This will avoid stretching out of shape.

Two round centerpieces may be made from one square of cloth. After cutting the largest circle from the square that you can, sew the remaining corners together with lace insertion joined to the straight edges. You will have something that looks like a cross. From the center of this cut your other round centerpiece.

Pretty portieres can be made at home by exercising a little ingenuity. One pair seen lately was of soft green arras cloth Two bands of olive-brown linen were applied to the curtains, about six inches from the bottom. The tops of these bands were outlined in a heavy line of golden tan rope silk in outline stitch, and the lower edges of the bands were treated in the same way in olive-green rope silk. Three embroidered bands of outline embroidery also ran the length of the curtains These bands were composed of three lines of rope silk, two tan and one green in the middle.

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### WOMAN'S PREPAREDNESS.

"Sure I believe in preparedness," declared my friend the Business Woman.

"Meaning——" I wanted to know

"Meaning that I'm not anxious to get into a fight, but that I'm ready to do my darnedest, if I've got to," she explained.

"Preparedness doesn't indicate a certainty of fighting, you know. It doesn't exactly mean spending a lot of money on [illegible]ng array, either. Now, take me for instance——"

"Gladly," I murmured

"Don't be silly," snorted my friend the Business Woman "I wish merely to illustrate a common individual case of preparedness

"My folks started it. They gave me a healthy body and a practical education. They set me on my feet, turned my face toward the world and indicated that it was up to me to go to it.

"I went to it. Naturally, I had an idea that the world was my oyster. I found out that the world considered me the oyster. There was a battle royal till I discovered that the world was somewhat bigger and stronger than yours truly Also I learned that the world wasn't my enemy any more than my intimate friend, and that I should have to prepare myself to work along with the general scheme of things if I was going to find any substantial success.

"I went in for more education. I kept my eyes and ears intelligently open. I [illegible] of my health I studied the effect of dress, deportment [illegible] personality. I looked up the science of when to talk and when to keep my mouth shut. I exercised my brain till it was ready to jump quick in any direction. I cut out a lot of extremist ideas and cultivated some good, old-fashioned ones built on the rock foundation. I also cut out a lot of foolish spending of money, [illegible] count at the bank. I've stored away a lot of useful facts. I keep informed on important happenings.

And here I am, ready with a disarming smile for any belligerent who may happen along. If the other fellow won't disarm, I'm ready for him. If he wants my job, my defenses are ready. If he wants to hurt my feelings, I'll turn to him my other cheek—the brass one. If he insists that I'm not as good a man as he is, and I know he's right, I'm willing to admit it. If he isn't as good as I am, but wants to prove that he is, he'll get his chance, and then I'll set him down gently where he belongs."

"Just like you do with me," I softly sighed "By the way," I hastily added, "why the glad array of raiment this afternoon? You aren't wearing your usually sane and safe business outfit."

"Preparedness again," grinned my friend the Business Woman. "I'm going to a tea-fight this afternoon!"

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### Otherwise Engaged.

"How do you account for the high cost of living?"

"I don't have time to account for it," replied Mr. Growcher. "I'm too busy hustling for the price."

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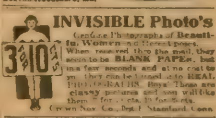

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# The Boy Skipper

## Or, The Skylark's Cruise

### By Milford Merrill

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### CHAPTER VII.

THERE was more strength in the slim fingers of his young rescuer than seemed possible, judging from their appearance, Phil discovered in their hearty handshake.

"What can we do now?" asked the boy skipper, presently.

"Go to the island, of course."

"But I must take immediate passage for Muskegon or Chicago," said Phil, anxious to be with his good ship once more.

The gaunt youth shook his head.

"You may have to stay here a month, there's no telling. Why, I would like to get away, too. I have important business to transact on the Atlantic seaboard, but I don't seem to have an early prospect of getting there."

"Why not sail to the mainland?"

"I wouldn't dare try it. Might get swamped if a storm came up. This boat isn't very seaworthy, you know. You'll have to content yourself with a sojourn on the island till some vessel happens to come within hailing distance. Be a sport, boy, be a sport!" and the queer chap laughed deep down in his long, slim throat.

"I don't feel happy over the prospect."

"No use making a fuss. Your ship went down, eh?"

"No."

"D'ye fall overboard?"

"Yes."

"Well, I'll be cussed if I can see why they let such a greenhorn as you out on deck when a storm was raging. Anybody could see that you haven't good sea legs," grinned the lean youth.

"You think I look like a greenhorn?"

"You sure do," assured the other. "Who are you, anyhow? I should think your mother would be more careful of her darling child."

The sarcasm in the speaker's voice served to nettle our hero.

[illegible] was captain of the ship," said Phil.

"Captain nothing!"

"Nevertheless it is the truth."

"What's your name?"

"I am not ashamed to say that it is Philip Hatchway."

"Eh?" with sudden interest. "You ain't old Tobe Hatchway's son, of Muskegon, are you?"

"The same chap, Mr. ——"

"I'm Admiral Selkirk's son, to the Navy born. For short they call me Jibb. And you tell me you are the son of old Tobe Hatchway of Muskegon?"

The astonished ring in the speaker's voice seemed genuine.

"Tobias Hatchway is my father."

"Shake again."

The speaker slumped off his seat and requested Phil to take the tiller. He claimed to feel a little the worse for his morning exercise. Our boy hero was willing enough to guide the sailboat, tacking back to port on Bear Island. His new acquaintance interested him, and the two soon came to feel quite like old acquaintances. To find a man who knew his father was certainly a pleasure to Phil.

"I've heard the old man talk about you by the hour, Philip," went on the garrulous Mr. Selkirk. "He and I have seen some good times together. Didn't he ever tell you about me?"

"Never," said Phil.

"Queer thing that, seeing as he and I have sailed many a trip together on the old brig North Star. That was a long time ago, of course."

"You must have been a kid then," laughed the boy skipper.

"How old do you think I am?"

It seemed to Phil that something like an amused glitter shone thru the shadowed eyeglasses worn by Selkirk.

"Not over 16."

The other exploded with mirth.

"I must look like some kid all right," he echoed. "Why, man alive, I'll never see 30 again! You don't believe it, but it's a fact. Why, I sailed twice around the world with Admiral Selkirk; cut my eyeteeth going round the Horn in my teens. They all tell me I have a youthful appearance. Old Stanley always called me 'boy,' and that nettled me as well as my aunt. When he took in a peelgarlic from down shore to fill my place I bolted, I did."

Hugging his slim waist with his folded arms the speaker rocked back and forth as if in pain.

"Are you ill, Mr. Selkirk?" asked Phil, who was more amused than anything else over his discovery of this unique specimen.

"I've got a pain all right. Hard work [illegible] with me," explained Jibb. "I shall have to hark back to the salt seas once more if I expect to exist much longer on this mundane ball."

Was the chap a sailor? Phil did not credit his assertions. He was simply a crank of the first water. As for being 30 years old, our boy hero knew better. He was possibly out of his teens, but he looked young even for that. There were many boys of 15 more mature in appearance than this queer freak of nature calling himself Jibb Selkirk.

"How's your stomach now, Mr. Selkirk?"

"Better. Shall I take the helm?"

"No. I can manage it all right. I am anxious to get to land and find out what can be done. My seamen will be anxious about me—perhaps about Kinderhook, too."

"Kinderhook? What do you know about him?"

The speaker lifted his head, peering sharply thru his clouded glasses at his companion.

"A lot," admitted Phil.

"You just now said your friends on the boat you deserted would miss him," proceeded Selkirk. "It can't be possible that he was aboard your ship last night."

"Why not, Jibb?"

"Because I saw him only this morning on Bear Island."

"Strange if true," mused Phil.

"I trust you don't think I am lying?" inquired the other, in a hurt tone.

"Oh, no, simply telling an untruth. But I beg your pardon, Mr. Selkirk, I am too deeply indebted to you for saving me from drowning. I owe you——"

"Not a red cent, old boy!" cheerily cried the other. "I like you, and we shall be friends. You have a large share to take in the world before you pass over. It wouldn't be right for a youngster like you to pass in his checks so precipitate like. When I was on board the Wabash, I met a lad somewhat after your style, and we became fast friends."

Phil was not really interested in this talk. However, he did feel a deep interest in what Selkirk said about Kinderhook. Could it be possible that the villain who had assaulted him on the previous night had escaped from death in the lake, and was as early as this safe on land?

Quite impossible, thought our boy skipper. There had not been time enough elapse since the battle in the lake for the man to make the shift.

Yet Phil was interested. His assailant of the night was not really Kinderhook, simply an impostor. Mayhap the real Kinderhook was on Bear Island. If this were true Phil's adventure with the would-be homicide might not prove wholly a misfortune.

The boy skipper was very anxious to meet said Kinderhook. The elder Hatchway had intimated that this man might have something to tell that would prove of much interest.

The shores of Bear Island began to loom up not far away.

"About this Kinderhook?" suddenly queried Phil.

"Yes, what about him?"

"I think you must be mistaken about his being on the island," pursued the young skipper. "He was on board the Skylark last night."

"Not he," declared Selkirk, sitting upright, dropping his lean arms to his sides. "He was surely on the island after night, for I saw him."

"Then the man who represented himself to me as Kinderhook was an impostor," and Phil told his rescuer of his adventure of the previous night.

Selkirk gave vent to a low whistle after the boy skipper had concluded his account.

"So, so!" muttered he. "There's more villainy afoot."

Jibb heaved a sigh, then regarded the face of Phil keenly, more sharply than the clouded glasses revealed.

"It seems there was villainy afoot all right," admitted our boy skipper. "The only way I can account for it is by placing my queer passenger down as a madman."

"So?"

"How else account for his desire to slay me?" propounded Phil, thoughtfully. "I haven't an enemy in the world."

"You think you haven't."

"I know I haven't, since I never knowingly wronged a human being."

Selkirk laughed commiseratingly. Phil could see that he was skeptical as to his lack of enemies.

"One doesn't always have to do some person an injury in order to make enemies," went on Jibb Selkirk, with his low, wheezy twang. "I've made lots of 'em unwittingly."

"But none who would wish to take your life?"

"Oh, yes, I have," declared Jibb, with a peculiar toss of his head, a gurgling chuckle down deep in his slim throat. "Many a man would be glad to hear that Jibb Selkirk had shuffled into eternity, dozens of them."

"Why should that be so?" puzzled the boy skipper.

To him it did not seem possible that this man Selkirk was worthy of much consideration from any one, much less from men who sought money or vengeance in covert ways. Jibb Selkirk was intelligent enough, yet he was not one to be reckoned with by strong men.

"Well, it's this way," grinned the other. "I've been the means of making men, some big guns, too, fear me. You smile in doubt, but it's a fact."

"Possibly," agreed Phil.

"Up at Ironport there's a man, a mean-souled creature, who'd be glad to hear that I was fathoms deep in old Lake Michigan."

"Who is this man?"

"Can you guess?"

"No."

"A distant relative of mine by marriage—David Stanley. You've heard of him, haven't you, my boy?"

"Surely. I sold him a cargo of flour and meats this last trip."

"Well, all I've got to say is, watch out. If you didn't get your cash in hand you'll have trouble collecting the same," and the speaker ended with a grim laugh.

### CHAPTER VIII.

PAPA, where has Jibb gone?" It was Maida speaking as she breezed into her stepfather's presence one morning while he sat at his desk in the inner office downtown.

"Eh, Maida, did you say something?"

The mine owner removed his spectacles, laid down his pen and glanced at the bright face of his stepdaughter, on which there gloomed a look of evident concern.

"Yes, papa, I asked after Cousin Jibb," said the girl.

"Heavens, girl, don't!" roared the mogul of Ironport. "The idea of calling that sandhill crane 'cousin!' You know he isn't a relative of mine."

"He is of mine, tho," insisted the girl.

"A sixteenth cousin, which is no relation at all," jeered Stanley. "I put young Caswell in his place, as you know. Now what is the trouble? You didn't expect I was going to have that lazy dude hanging around doing nothing, did you?"

"No matter what I thought, papa. I want to know where he has gone."

"I can't tell you," he growled. "If to the bottom of the lake it would be the best thing that could happen."

"Why, father!" in a shocked voice.

"The blamed dude was no good, Maida, child. I only tolerated him to please you and your mother. Aren't you satisfied with the change?"

"The change?"

"From Jibb to Elias. I think the latter is about as smart a youngster as they make 'em. He is proving his efficiency every day. He is abundantly able to take care of himself and the team, too, as well as attend to the stunts I give him to do. Don't you think I made a good exchange, my girl?"

"Maybe you did," the girl replied, tapping her small foot on the oiled hardwood floor. "But even then, that doesn't account for the absence of Mr. Selkirk, papa."

"Oh, he knew enough to fly his kite after I kicked him out!" laughed the big man of Ironport.

"Why, father!"

"Absolutely had to do it, Maida. He wouldn't take a hint without a kick, so I gave it to him. I hope you won't cry over losing that mooning young ganderShanks."

"You drove Selkirk away, papa? That's what you mean?"

"That's it exactly. He was a humbug, anyhow, imposing on you and your mother. Women folks never seem to have much sense where the men are concerned. Now, I venture to say that your mother never saw this crane-necked Robinson Crusoe till he put in an appearance here a few weeks ago, claiming relationship to her. Ain't that so, Maida?"

Mr. Stanley was in a pleasant mood for the time, and it gave the girl a refreshing tonic. She agreed that her stepfather had stated the facts with regard to Mr. Jibb Selkirk. He had come to Mound Grove a few weeks before, hailing, he said, from "way down East," and making a claim to the friendship of the Stanleys from the fact of his being a distant relative of Mrs. Stanley. The latter, having the blue blood of New England ancestors in her veins, was not loath to make the acquaintance of anybody of the same aristocratic lineage, so Selkirk became a fixture at the house for a while.

None of the time, however, did the mine owner greet him with assured friendliness, and, as we have seen, at the first opportunity to excuse him, he sent the pretender adrift.

Neither Maida nor her mother was deeply grieved, since the distant cousin had failed to make a very deep impress upon their affections. The coming of Elias Caswell, altho he was not a relative, quite filled the place of the absent one.

"It's about time for Elias now," muttered Stanley, turning again to his office work.

Maida went out, singing blithely, show-

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ing very plainly that the disappearance of Jibb Selkirk had not bothered her greatly.

Stanley was ugly and tyrannical sometimes. He may have loved his wife and stepdaughter, but he had a strange way of showing his affection.

A newsboy breezed in, laying the Morning Press at the mine owner's elbow. After a little Stanley picked up the paper and ran his eye over the headlines. Finding nothing of especial importance he tossed it aside.

"Hum, it's about time, too, to hear something," he muttered.

That day, when Elias drove up to Mound Grove, fetching his employer to luncheon, Maida stood watching from the steps with a paper in her hand.

The girl said nothing to her stepfather, but waited until Caswell came in, when she placed the paper in his hand, pointing to a bit of news on the front page. It was the noon edition of the Morning Press, hence it had not contained this especial item of news earlier in the day.

"Lost overboard in a storm," Elias read aloud.

Continuing, he soon became informed of the fact that his friend Phil Hatchway had perished in a storm on Lake Michigan a few nights before. The schooner Skylark had gone into port at Muskegon with the news of the loss of its skipper and the only passenger, a Mr. Kinderhook.

The news stunned Caswell, whose face paled as he read. Phil Hatchway was the best friend Elias had in all the world.

"He was the young fellow I saw at papa's office about the time you came, Elias?" asked Maida.

"The same, Maida," returned the tall boy, in a shaking voice. "Phil drowned in the big lake! Oh, this is terrible! I can hardly believe it."

"It is too bad, of course," agreed the girl. "He was a nice-looking boy."

"It isn't that," faltered Caswell. "He was the best friend a fellow ever had. I don't see how it could have happened, either, since the ship was not lost." The boy bit his lip and frowned.

"It says he was washed overboard in a storm."

"I know, but that seems hardly likely. And there was a man lost, too, a man named Kinderhook. Phil said there were no passengers, that he never carried any on the Skylark. Something queer about it all. My friend was the best swimmer I ever saw. How could he drown?"

At this moment Mr. Stanley, who had entered the house, came out, noticing the boy and girl earnestly discussing something.

"What seems to be the trouble?" asked he.

Elias showed him the paper, pointing to the catastrophe on the lake.

"Well, I'll be blinged!" exclaimed the man.

His eyes took on a look of sullen satisfaction.

"So the lad was careless enough to get washed overboard," continued the mine owner. "Reckless rat! I always was afraid something like this would happen to old Tobe's boy. Well, in the midst of life we are in death!" and he sighed complacently, tossing the paper back to Maida.

"Well, what do you think of that?" exclaimed Maida, as her stepfather walked into the house, whistling a blithe tune.

"I think he is altogether heartless," retorted Elias, who felt the loss of his chum most keenly.

"Papa acted just as tho he didn't care very much," said grave-faced little Maida.

Elias went to the front steps and threw himself down, with his slim, long legs crossed, his chin cupped in the palm of his hand. Two big tears rolled down his cheeks.

"I can't believe it, I can't believe it!" he kept murmuring.

Little Maida watched the tall boy with sympathetic interest.

"It's too bad," she said, going to him and laying a hand on his shoulder, "and maybe it isn't true. Your friend Phil may be picked up. The paper doesn't know yet. I hope he has been saved."

Caswell glanced up thru tears at the sweet, sympathetic face of the girl. Her sympathy was very precious to him at this moment.

"I—I shan't believe it's true till I hear more," declared he, pressing the little hand that lay against his shoulder. "You didn't know old Phil, Maida. If you did you would know how I feel."

"I can guess," the girl said in a low voice.

The two were called to luncheon, but neither obeyed.

"Children, aren't you coming?"

It was Mrs. Stanley who opened the door to look out upon the boy and girl sitting there in the cool shadows of the porch.

"Haven't you heard the news, mamma?" cried Maida, springing to her feet, and approaching her mother with the paper in hand.

The woman had not. When she read it, she sighed, saying, "It is terrible!"

Maida went back to the boy on the steps.

"I think you'd [illegible] come to luncheon," she said later, hesitating in the doorway. "David will be angry if we keep him waiting."

Too well the little girl knew what that anger meant. She still felt the smart of administered punishment from the stepfather. She at once sprang to obey the summons. Elias Caswell, however, sat motionless, trying to smother his grief.

"You better come, Elias," said Maida. "You know what father is when he is angry."

The girl always spoke of the houseowner as "father" when in awe of his near presence, as on the present occasion. The boy did not move.

"Oh, mamma, I do wish he would come!" fretted Maida, feeling a chill creep over her when she remembered an angry stepfather.

But Elias remained sitting on the step, having lost all desire for anything to eat.

Mother and daughter passed inside. When they reported why the new employe would not come to his meal, David Stanley was very angry.

"Fool!" he growled, "to waste any sympathy on old Tobe's boy."

However, the man was hungry, and fell to eating without further ado.

When the luncheon was over, the master of the house strode to the front steps, where sat Elias Caswell, gazing into vacancy.

"Go in and eat!" commanded Stanley.

"I do not care for anything at present, Mr. Stanley.

"All right!" came the answer, with a sneer. "Starve yourself if you want to, boy, but let me tell you, I think that smarty captain of the Skylark got what was coming to him."

The speaker strode hastily away. Elias sat staring after him, a weird horror filling his heart and brain.

"David Stanley, you are no better than a murderer!" exclaimed angered and insulted Caswell, starting to his feet, a sudden resolve to break with the mine owner of Ironport filling his brain.

## CHAPTER IX.

PHIL HATCHWAY had been three days on the island when he met Job Kinderhook. There was no mistaking the man this time. Phil had received from his father a full description of the man, and his wooden leg was striking testimony to the man's identity.

"Lost that 'ere leg in the big storm that sunk the Alpena," said Job.

"Were you on that boat, Mr. Kinderhook?" asked Phil.

"I should say not," laughed the man. "Nobody escaped to tell the tale. Have you forgotten, my lad?"

"No," answered the boy. "I hadn't forgotten that every one on the ill-fated boat perished, but, you see, I hear so many sailor yarns, where most important matters of history are refuted, I thought, perhaps——"

"I see," grinned Kinderhook, his grizzled face beaming. "But I ain't one o' that sort. I always tell the truth—especially about my seafaring life. Come into Bob's and licker-up, and I'll tell ye some things that'll make yer hair stan' on end."

"No," said Phil, "I haven't got the sailor's bad habit of drink."

"That's as you like it, young feller. I ain't urgin' no boy to drink ag'in' his principles. Now your daddy, the ancient Tobias, was what you call a master hand at layin' folks under the table with the drink; but, by hokey, I'm glad his son ain't follerin' in the old man's footsteps."

"You knew father well?"

"Twenty years ago, yes; not so very well late years."

"He got a letter once from you."

"Exactly," and Mr. Kinderhook became serious. "I writ him 'at I wanted right bad to see him. I had a secret."

"A secret? You may tell it to me——"

"No, no!" and he shook his grizzled head. "Boys can't keep sich things to themselves; wuss'n women about that. Asides, I don't wish to rouse any false hopes."

"All of which is Greek to me."

"Very likely. I'd like to see old Tobias."

"Had my ship not cast me into the sea, you should see him," said the boy skipper. "I had orders to fetch you with me to Muskegon, where my father is now living. From your letter he argued that you had something important to tell him?"

"That's a fact, my lad, something 'at's rested on my mind for a long time. It may be something that old Tobe won't like to hear, and yet it may please him. I've kept the secret fur a good while and it's kinder worryin' me, see?"

"Don't let it worry you any longer then, Mr. Kinderhook. Tell me all about it, won't you? Confession will ease your conscience."

"Confession!" with a sharp inward growl. "By hokey, lad, don't go to suspectin' I've done anythin' I'm ashamed of, or that the law can tech me for! 'Tain't that, boy, 'tain't that—oh, no!"

The speaker puffed at the black clay pipe between his teeth, sucking the mahogany-colored stem until it wheezed for mercy. Phil saw that he was considerably excited.

He remembered the various occasions on which his father had spoken of Job Kinderhook as one of the oldest sailors on the lakes; a good, honest man at that, yet very eccentric and unreadable. Within the [illegible] the elder Hatch-

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way's health had been waning, and he seemed doubly anxious to see and talk with the ancient mariner of the North country.

Phil had not expected to meet the old sailor on the island, having every reason to believe that he was in Ironport, where the letter he had sent his father a few months ago had been mailed. Kinderhook explained that he had come to Bear Island on a fishing trip with an old friend, and that he had become ill and was unable to return when his partner did.

"Well," and Phil got to his feet. The two had been seated on the upturned bottom of an old Mackinac boat which had long since been stranded for good and all, and was going to decay beneath the wind and bleaching sun of the North. "I shan't try to overpersuade you, Mr. Kinderhook. My mission was to fetch you to Muskegon. I suppose you'll not object to accompanying me whenever the chance offers?"

"No, sir, no!" exclaimed the old mariner, in not uncertain tones. "I'll take one more passage on the deep in order to meet my old friend Tobias."

"Thank you, Job, that is all I ask. I fear Daddy isn't long for this world, and it would be a shame for you never to see him again."

"Oh, I must see him!" ejaculated Kinderhook, removing his black pipe.

"Is it of much importance?"

"I reckon it air—about a million, more or less."

"A million what?"

"Dollars, of course. D'ye expect 'twas pounds o' sugar or copper?"

"Hardly," smiled Phil, dusting his trousers.

He stood thinking for a minute, glancing at the grizzled man on the boat bottom. He could not help wondering what this man's secret was. There was surely something to it since his father had strictly bade him find old Kinderhook if possible and fetch him home with him.

"My father was very anxious to see you, Mr. Kinderhook," added Phil. "I hope it may not be too late."

"Now too late? The old sea dog ain't a-goin' ter quit livin', I hope?"

"No one can tell that. It might be best for you to confide in me, Job," suggested our boy hero, considerably interested in what he believed the old sailor had to tell.

The old sailor again sucked the black stem of his pipe.

"Durn it!" he growled. "What a teaser ye are, boy!"

The keen old eyes, set deep under shaggy brows, were now upturned to the face of his boy companion, as if studying every feature.

"Durned ef he don't look it, he do for a fact," muttered the cracked lips about the pipestem. "There'd be a good home for me if it turned out the way I think. I've a good notion to squeal."

Phil stood silent, waiting for the old man's thoughts to [illegible] was really anxious for a solution of the riddle that confronted him in the person of this one-legged sailor of the lakes who had seen his best days and was now in the decline of life. What adventures he must have met during his sailing days!

"I wasn't no chicken no more when it happened," muttered the puckered lips.

Phil still remained silent. At length he began to move off.

"Ain't goin', be you, Phil?" quickly asked the sailor.

"I think so," informed the boy. "I can't afford to waste any more time in useless talk. I must devise some plan by which I can reach the mainland. It is up to me to get back to my ship as soon as possible. It doesn't seem likely that a vessel will touch this island for a long time—I shall not wait for that."

"Eh? But that's the only way, my boy."

"I do not think so. One of these calm mornings Selkirk and I will take the sailboat and cross the lake to Michigan. I can get to Muskegon by rail there."

"Would you leave me behind?"

"I shall have to, Job. You are of no use to me——"

"But I may be, boy," quickly interjected the sailor. "Your dad——"

"Never mind fetching him in, Mr. Kinderhook. You don't seem to care about talking of the past with me. When I get home I'll tell father that you refused to talk."

"Set down, boy, and I'll tell you somethin'," growled old Job.

Phil obeyed, hoping to hear something worth hearing.

"D'ye know old Dave Stanley, Phil?"

"Just a little," admitted the boy.

"You saw the critter in Ironport, didn't ye?"

"Yes, I sold him a cargo of meat and flour."

"That so? Well, then you must 'a' been round with him considerable."

"I was," agreed Phil.

"What'd he say to ye?"

"We talked business mostly."

"How about the man you said went into the lake with you, the feller 'at misrepresented me?"

"Nothing in particular."

"D'ye think he meant murder?"

"I am sure of it."

"Good thing he drowned, wasn't it? Now, why did he want to kill you, since you say he was a stranger?"

"To me it is a mystery."

"But not to me."

"What do you mean?" cried Phil, quickly. "Did you know the man who pretended to be Job Kinderhook?"

"Jest a tough, I reckon," returned the one-legged sailor, moving his head up and down as if to bring out some new thought. "Ye see, there's plenty such in the mining and port towns."

"But why——"

"Jest a minute, boy," said the old man, laying a grim touch on the other's shoulder. "I'm goin' to explain in good time. You got in contact 'long of old Dave, and he's the one 'at wanted you to sink in the big lake."

"Now, then, what are you giving me?"

"Jest a few facts. Old Dave Stanley don't like Tobias Hatchway."

"And he would revenge himself on him thru his son?"

"Somethin' like that. Yes, that's it, boy. You look like your dad, and old Dave hates you because of that."

Phil whistled. He remembered how queerly the old mine owner eyed him while he sat in his office at Ironport. He understood it now. The man hated his father, and sought revenge by hiring a tough to toss him into the lake. When Phil stated the case thus old Job burst into a laugh.

And yet why had his father sent him, Phil, to meet Stanley, even to sell him a cargo, if there was such a deadly enmity between the older men?

"I don't quite understand," said the boy skipper.

"You will later, I reckon," chuckled Kinderhook.

"Tell me all about it, sir."

"About what?"

"This feud between Mr. Stanley and my father."

"Not now, Philip." The speaker got to his feet with difficulty. "I will, however, go with you to Michigan, from there to Muskegon, and see and talk with Tobe. He and I can fix things, when maybe he'll tell you. I'll say this: Dave Stanley's the worst enemy you've got in this world, Phil Hatchway."

Phil assisted the old sailor to walk back to his boarding-place.

This most interesting story will be continued in the next issue of the Ledger. During the coming months many great stories will appear in these columns. If you are not already a subscriber for this paper, it will repay you to send in a year's subscription. It costs you only $1.00, and you will never regret it. Let us hear from you at once.

* * *

## THE SPEECH BACILLUS.

The very young man coughed before he spoke. "They've asked me to make a speech," he announced, "on the traction question at the next monthly meeting of our club!"

"Why, Robert!" exclaimed his mother. "How nice!"

"H'm!" said his father. "Have [illegible] the time tables?"

"Time tables?" echoed the very young man, bewildered. "What for?"

"For your escape," explained his father. "Your getaway, so to speak. Before they have a chance to wish anything like a speech onto you!"

"Why, father!" cried his wife, indignantly. "I am sure Robert would make a very nice speech! What do you mean by talking so?"

"I am trying to do my duty as a father," said her husband. "And to save my child. When you have lived to my age and viewed the agonizing wrecking of many a promising career thru a pretty little speech it moves you to desperate measures to prevent your offspring sharing such a dreadful fate!

"Why," he continued, "even I made a speech once. It was twenty years ago. And only last week I met a man who was present at the time and the police had to pull us apart when we got arguing about that speech! Parcuttle began most amiably. He lit his cigar and said: 'Say, Riggle, do you remember the time when we were cubs and you had the speech mania and spouted at our banquet concerning Britain's foreign policy? Her foreign policy—and by heck, you didn't even know who was running for alderman in your own ward! Har! Har!'

"Now, I resented Parcuttle's saying that I had the speech mania, because I was distinctly modest and had to be urged, while he had to be restrained by force from bursting into long-winded speeches on every occasion when he was about 21. I told him so, and he got mad, and the result was we'll never speak to one another again as long as we live. I'd hate to see Robert alienate his dearest friends by making a speech."

"But I'm not going to make that kind of a speech," interposed his son.

"It was a splendid speech!" bristled his father, instantly. "And you need not jeer at it! Just because Parcuttle didn't like it is no sign—and then there was Embarden. Embarden hung around and hung around when they were making up the program for the last annual convention of manufacturers here until they had to put him on the list to get rid of him. He swelled up instantly and became most disagreeable. He went around haughtily gazing down on the rest of us from an infinite altitude and frowned mightily with his great thoughts.

"And when the time came he read for an hour and a half to a bunch of manufacturers a jumble of statistics and words about the great horn spoon or something equally entertaining and before he got thru with it all the members were fighting the program committee for letting him on and the program committee said it was Embarden's fault and eventually not one of those 453 men would speak one word to any of the others.

"I tremble for you, Robert! Why, Dilpickle is still trying to live down some rash statement he made in a speech five years ago! They shorthand your speeches, you know, and print 'em, and when they are in cold type, glaring up at you, it makes you ill clear to your boots to recognize the mistakes and foolish spots in 'em!

"A speech is not a temporary thing, my son, to be tossed off lightsomely, bringing congratulations in its train, as you seem to think! It is a goggle-eyed monster, an Old Man of the Sea, that you can't pry loose! Besides, you know just as much about the traction question as I do about the brand of neckties they are wearing in Mars."

"All the easier to talk about it, then," insisted his son. "Nothing so hampers oratory as do facts and knowledge! It's infinitely easier to use your imagination! Then nobody can hop on you! I don't care for any facts in mine!"

His father groaned. "The speech," he predicted, "is going to stalk you to the day of your death! Can nothing dissuade you?"

"Not a durned thing," replied the very young man cheerfully. "I'm tickled to pieces at the chance!"

"Well," sighed his father, "I expect I had better help you prepare it, then. I'd kind of like to make a speech myself again! I——"

"No, you don't!" said the very young man firmly. "This is all my own speech and I don't want any one else fussing with it! Besides, you made a speech once, you know!"

"Oh, take your blamed old speech," growled his parent, "if you're going to be so selfish about it!"

* * *

### Coining Money.

"That's the most realistic wild man I ever saw. His contortions are horrible."

"Just confidentially," said the sideshow manager, "I'll tell you what's the matter with poor Sam. He's suffering with a jumping toothache. It seems a shame to make him stay in his cage all day, but look at the business we're doing!"

Knocks Obstinate Coughs in a Hurry

A Simple Home-Made Remedy that Gets at the Cause.

Thousands of people normally healthy in every other respect, are annoyed with a persistent hanging-on bronchial cough year after year, disturbing their sleep and making life disagreeable. It's so needless—there's an old home-made remedy that will end such a cough easily and quickly.

Get from any druggist "2½ ounces of Pinex" (50 cents worth), pour it into a pint bottle and fill the bottle with plain granulated sugar syrup. Begin taking it at once. Gradually but surely you will notice the phlegm thin out and then disappear altogether, thus ending a cough that you never thought would end. It also promptly loosens a dry or tight cough, stops the troublesome throat tickle, soothes the irritated membranes that line the throat and bronchial tubes, and relief comes almost immediately. A day's use will usually break up an ordinary throat or chest cold, and for bronchitis, croup, whooping cough and bronchial asthma there is nothing better. It tastes pleasant and keeps perfectly.

Pinex is a most valuable concentrated compound of genuine Norway pine extract, combined with guaiacol and is used by millions of people every year for throat and chest colds with splendid results.

To avoid disappointment, ask your druggist for "2½ ounces of Pinex" with full directions and don't accept anything else. A guarantee of absolute satisfaction or money promptly refunded goes with this preparation. The Pinex Co., 204 Main St., Ft. Wayne, Ind.

PILES TREATED AT HOME BY NEW ABSORPTION METHOD

If you suffer from bleeding, itching, blind or protruding Piles, send me your address, and I will tell you how to treat yourself at home by the new absorption method; and will also send some of this home treatment free for trial, with references from your own locality if requested. Users report immediate relief and speedy cures. Send no money, but tell others of this offer. Write today to Mrs. M. Summers, Box 457, South Bend, Ind.

146,135 LONE SCOUTS

In 62 Weeks, 146,135 Boys have taken the following pledge as members of Lone Scouts of America:

"I pledge my allegiance to my flag and the nation for which it stands, with liberty and justice for all. I will 'Do a Useful Thing Each Day,' and be worthy of the name, Lone Scout."

The Lone Scouts of America was incorporated in Washington, District of Columbia, in 1915. At the first meeting of the incorporators, by-laws were adopted and W. D. Boyce was elected **Chief Totem**. The first Lone Scout took the pledge on October 25, 1915.

1 The Lone Scouts of America is for all wide-awake, ambitious boys everywhere. Any boy who can understand the pledge is eligible to membership. The pledge is so worded as to make the organization world-wide, including any boy living under some other flag than the United States flag. The Lone Scouts of America encourages patriotism, but is not a military organization in any sense.

2 The purpose of the Lone Scouts of America is to give the boys all the advantages of the Boy Scout movement (which was started in the United States by W. D. Boyce, Chief Totem of the Lone Scouts) while permitting them to operate alone if it is not convenient for them to belong to Tribes. Woodcraft and Scouting are only a part of the instructions. The Lone Scout motto is: **"Do a Useful Thing Each Day."** Every boy who lives up to this motto is going to be a successful man.

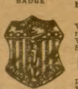
3 There are no membership dues or fees to pay; no expensive equipment for boys or their parents to buy. The Lone Scouts of America is not a money-making proposition. The organization is supported by the sale of its weekly magazine, "Lone Scout," in which instructions are given the Scouts. "Lone Scout" is sold by news agents for 3 cents a copy. Subscription rates, 25 cents four months, 75 cents a year.

4 As a member progresses in his Scout work he is awarded Degrees with appropriate Badges, and these Degrees make up Lodges. Badges of the first three Degrees (Tepee Lodge) are shown on the left. After the Tepee Lodge comes the Totem Pole Lodge. A member in this Lodge is entitled to put up a Lone Scout Totem Pole, upon which is placed a record of his Degrees.

5 In applying for membership, fill out the Application Blank given below, and send it with 2-cent stamp.

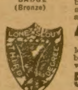
W. D. BOYCE, Chief Totem,
500 North Dearborn Street, Chicago, Ill.

MEMBERSHIP BADGE

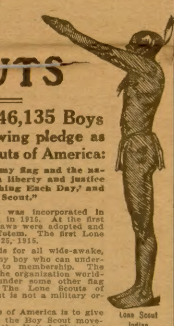


FIRST DEGREE BADGE (Bronze)

SECOND DEGREE BADGE (Bronze)



THIRD DEGREE BADGE (Silver)



Lone Scout Indian

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APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP J

CHIEF TOTEM, 500 North Dearborn Street, Chicago, Ill.

Date..........................................................1916

I am ready, with consent of my parents or guardian, to take the Lone Scout Pledge, which I have read. Herewith find 2 cents in stamps to pay for mailing Certificate of Membership in the Lone Scouts of America, First Degree Instructions and Tribe Booklet.

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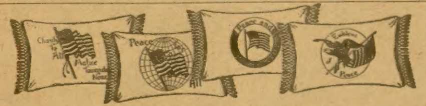

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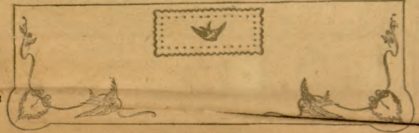

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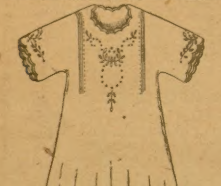

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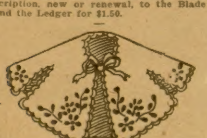

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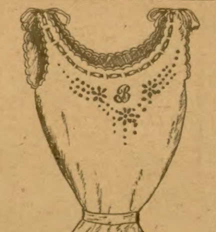

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* * *

## Vacation Worries.

"I haven't took my vacation yet," remarked Jerry, the elevator man, to his friend from the fifth floor. "And maybe if I can't find the proper man to take my place I'll not be able to get away at all."

"You're very foolish, Jerry," said the man from the fifth. "Beat it for two weeks while the weather is good. You've been guiding the car up and down this shaft for a long time now and you need a change."

"I know I need a change. But how is a man going to quit when he ain't got a good substitute to take his place? If I knew of some good journeyman elevator boy who had recommends from his last nine jobs I might let him try to run this car for a while. I have a great responsibility on my shoulders, but you tenants that I haul up and down every day don't seem to appreciate it somehow.

"Three years ago I took a notion I needed a vacation and decided to lay off for a week. I was scared to death that things would not go without me, and it took a lot of persuading to make me do it. When I was out in the country sitting under a tree I was picturin' calamities caused by the man that took my place.

"I could close my eyes and see the elevator drop from the nineteenth floor because he didn't know we had a safety brake on the car. An' I could see him knocking my old customers' heads against the top of the gate because he opened the door before they had a chance to get off. And he'd stop a foot below the floor, then shoot up a foot above and seesaw till every one was seasick.

"I could picture in my dreams all the best tenants leaving the building because my substitute was a speed maniac and he shot up the shaft like Barney Oldfield on a speedway.

"I certainly had my vacation worries that time. When I came back my worries increased."

"All your dire forebodings had come to pass?" asked the man from the fifth.

"Not one of them—that was the trouble," replied Jerry, sadly. "The substitute was a bird of a good mixer, and was calling all the tenants by their first names. Some of the girls liked him so well they'd let the other cars go by and wait for him. And as for running an elevator, why, he was such a careful driver they nicknamed him 'Safety First.'

"I had a hard job trying to get my car back, and it took two years for them tenants to forget Safety First and his winning ways. That's why I don't want no vacation unless the lad that takes my place is a daredevil. It's bad policy to have a substitute that's better than the original, huh."

* * *

A girl may call her small brother into the parlor and kiss him just to show the young man on the other end of the sofa what he is missing.

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The great difficulty in making one's own garments is to get suitable patterns. Our women readers could make many pretty and useful things for themselves and their children if they could get well-made patterns. We have arranged to give our readers a pattern service unexcelled.

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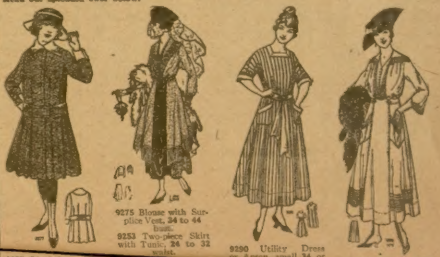

9277 Girl's Coat, 6 to 12 years.

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9290 Utility Dress or Apron, small 34 or [illegible] large 42 or 44 bust.

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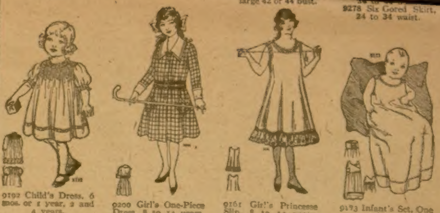

9192 Child's Dress, 6 mos. or 1 year, 2 and 4 years.

9200 Girl's One-Piece Dress, 8 to 14 years.

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9173 Infant's Set, One Size.

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Here is the way we will do it: To every one who will send us one dollar for a year's subscription to the Chicago Ledger we will send absolutely free five pattern coupons. Each coupon will be good for one pattern and you can select the patterns from those illustrated in any issue of the Chicago Ledger. When you see a pattern that you like all you have to do is to send us a coupon and it will be sent to you at once. In this way you will have hundreds of patterns from which to pick the five that you will be entitled to, and you have all the time you need to pick out the ones you want.

These patterns are the best that can be made. Each pattern gives full directions for the cutting and making, with information as to the amount of cloth required, etc., so that any one can make any of the designs illustrated with no trouble at all. At the same time, they are so stylish and accurately cut that dressmakers and seamstresses all over the country will be quick to take advantage of this liberal offer. Some will subscribe for two years so they can get ten coupons. These designs are made by the best designers and modists of New York and Paris, and are up-to-the-minute in fashion and beauty.

We treat old and new customers alike on this splendid offer. If you are already a subscriber send in a dollar and we will send you the five pattern coupons and extend your subscription one year from the time it now expires.

To get these five coupons entitling you to five patterns, fill out the blank below and enclose it with one dollar for a year's subscription to the Chicago Ledger. Do this now—today! No woman should be without the Ledger's Pattern Coupon Book. Be among the thousands of women who will get these coupons.

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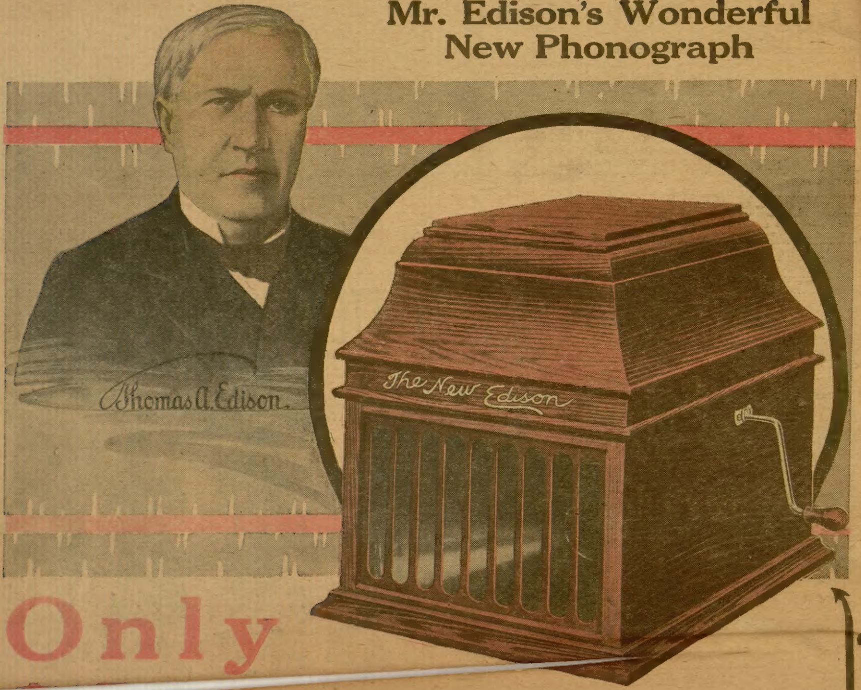

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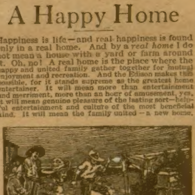
Yes, we will send you the New Edison, the product of the world's greatest inventor's genius, the phonograph with the wonderful diamond stylus reproducer and your choice of latest Diamond Amberol Records on *free trial without a penny down.* On this offer, you can now have the genuine Edison, the instrument which gives you real, home-like music, the finest and best of all phonographs at a small fraction of the price asked for imitations of Mr. Edison's great instrument. *Seize this opportunity!* Send coupon today—now!

## Rock-Bottom Direct Offer—

If, after the free trial, you decide to keep Mr. Edison's superb new instrument, send us only $1.00. Pay the balance on easiest kind of monthly payments. Think of it! A $1.00 payment, and a few dollars a month to get this wonderful new style outfit—Mr. Edison's great phonograph with the Diamond Stylus reproducer, all the musical results of the highest price outfits—the same Diamond Amberol Records—yes, the greatest value for $1.00 down, balance on easiest monthly terms. Convince yourself—free trial first. No money down, no C. O. D., not one cent to pay unless you choose to keep the instrument. Send coupon!

## A Happy Home

Happiness is life—and real happiness is found only in a real home. And by a *real home* I do not mean a house with a yard or farm around it. Oh, no! A real home is the place where the happy and united family gather together for mutual enjoyment and recreation. And the Edison makes this possible, for it stands supreme as the greatest home entertainer. It will mean more than entertainment and merriment, more than an hour of amusement, yes, it will mean genuine pleasure of the lasting sort—helpful entertainment and culture of the most beneficial kind. It will mean the family united—a new home.



## Entertain Your Friends

Get the New Edison in your home on free trial. Entertain your family and friends with the latest up-to-date song hits of the big cities. Laugh until your sides ache at the funniest of funny minstrel shows. Hear the grand old church hymns. Hear the crashing brass bands, the waltzes, the two-steps, the solos, the duets and quartettes. You will sit awe-striken at the wonderful grand operas as sung by the world's greatest singers. You will be moved by the tender, sweet harmony of quartettes singing those old melodies that you have heard all your life. Take your choice of any kind of entertainment. All on free trial. Then, after the trial, send the outfit back at our expense if you choose. Or keep it on our great rock-bottom offer. **Send the coupon today!**

## COUPON

**F. K. BABSON, Edison Phonograph Distributors,**
**5011 Edison Block, Chicago, Ill.**

Gentlemen:—Please send me your New Edison Catalog and full particulars of your free trial offer on the new model Edison Phonograph.

*Name*..............................................................

*Address*..........................................................

## Our NEW Edison Catalog Sent Free

Your name and address on a postal or in a letter (or just the coupon) is enough. No obligation in asking for the catalog. Get this offer—*while this offer lasts!*

**F. K. BABSON, Edison Phonograph Dist's.**
**5011 Edison Block, Chicago, Ill.**
**CANADIAN OFFICE: 355 Portage Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba**